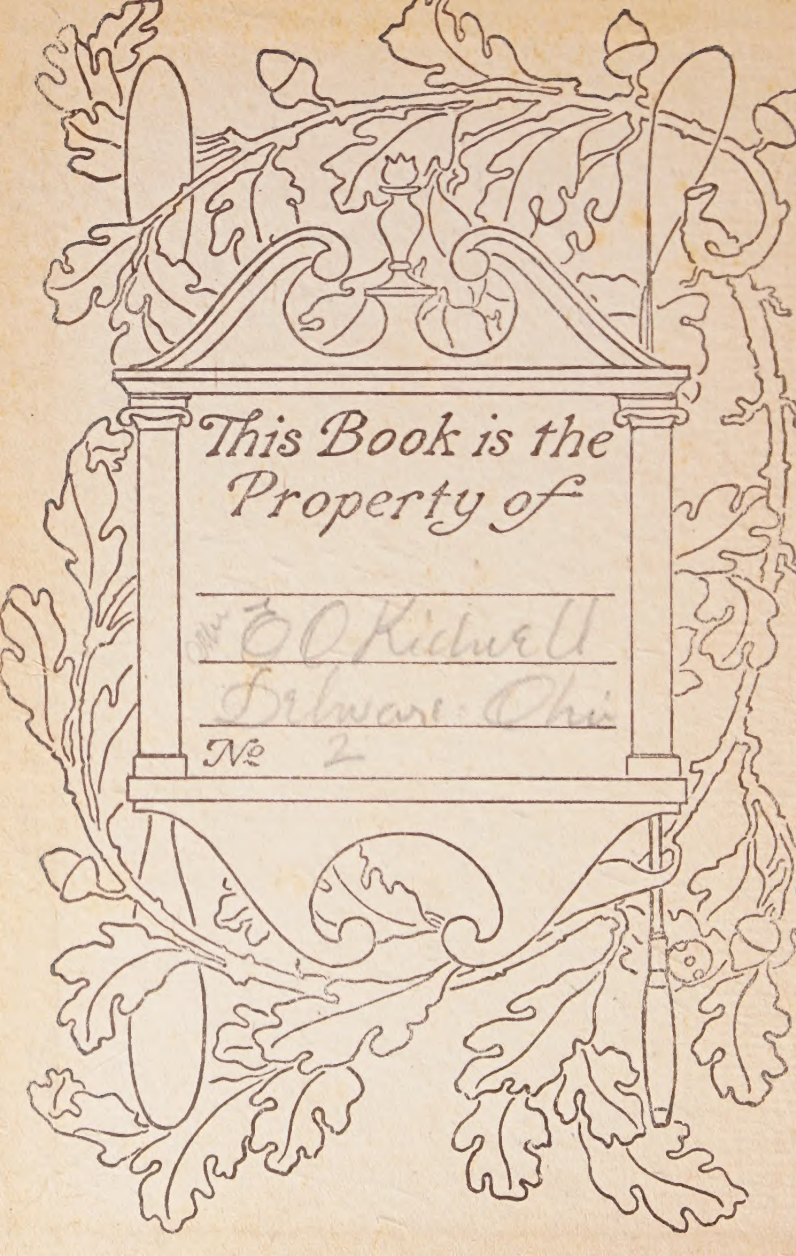




TRY AND
TRUST

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

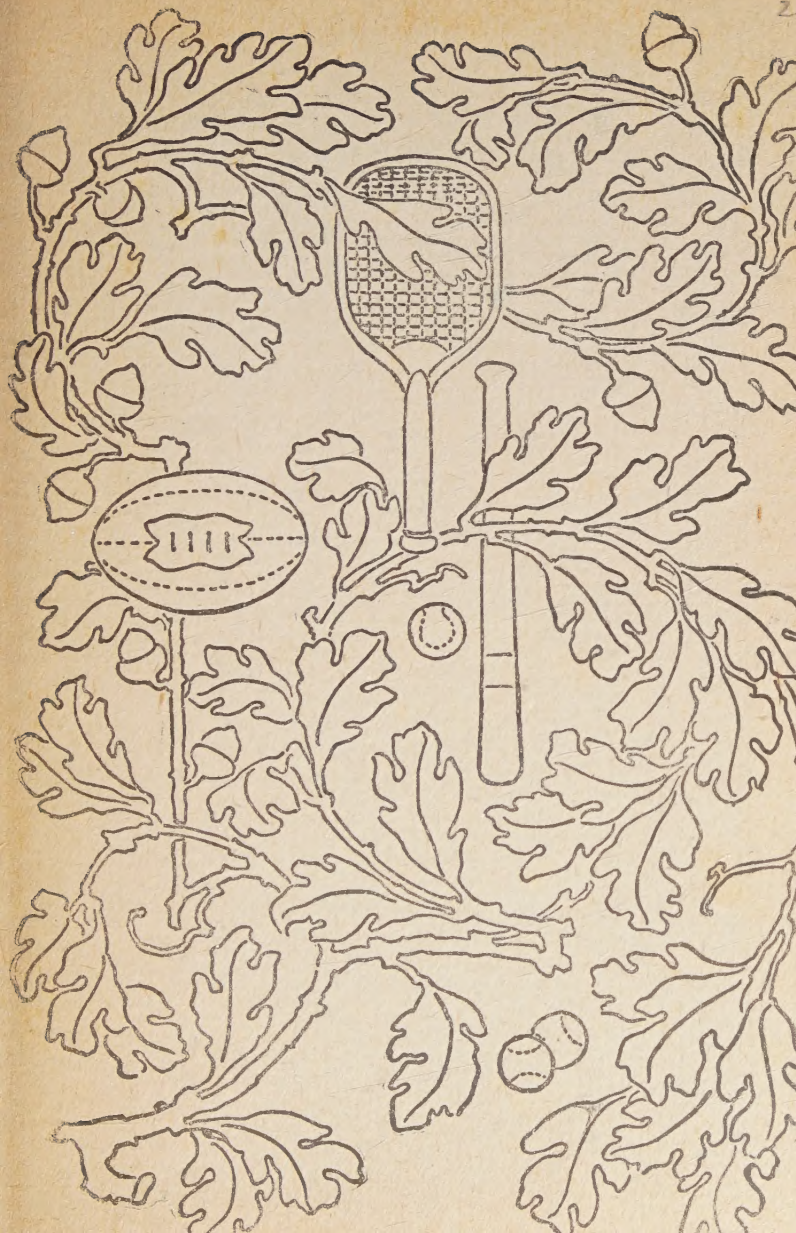


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"I have resolved to let this boy escape from you."

TRY AND TRUST

OR

ABNER HOLDEN'S BOUND BOY

BY

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

AUTHOR OF

"PAUL, THE PEDDLER," "PHIL, THE FIDDLER," "BOUND TO RISE,"
"RISEN FROM THE RANKS," ETC.



NEW YORK

NEW YORK BOOK COMPANY

1911

A decorative border with a repeating floral and leaf pattern surrounds the text. The border is composed of stylized leaves and small flowers, creating a frame around the central content.

BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

HORATIO ALGER, JR., an author who lived among and for boys and himself remained a boy in heart and association till death, was born at Revere, Mass., January 13, 1834. He was the son of a clergyman; was graduated at Harvard College in 1852, and at its Divinity School in 1860; and was pastor of the Unitarian Church at Brewster, Mass., in 1862-66.

In the latter year he settled in New York and began drawing public attention to the condition and needs of street boys. He mingled with them, gained their confidence, showed a personal concern in their affairs, and stimulated them to honest and useful living. With his first story he won the hearts of all red-blooded boys everywhere, and of the seventy or more that followed over a million copies were sold during the author's lifetime.

In his later life he was in appearance a short, stout, bald-headed man, with cordial manners and whimsical views of things that amused all who met him. He died at Natick, Mass., July 18, 1899.

Mr. Alger's stories are as popular now as when first published, because they treat of real live boys who were always up and about—just like the boys found everywhere to-day. They are pure in tone and inspiring in influence, and many reforms in the juvenile life of New York may be traced to them. Among the best known are:

Strong and Steady; Strive and Succeed; Try and Trust; Bound to Rise; Risen from the Ranks; Herbert Carter's Legacy; Brave and Bold; Jack's Ward; Shifting for Himself; Wait and Hope; Paul the Peddler; Phil the Fiddler; Slow and Sure; Julius the Street Boy; Tom the Bootblack; Struggling Upward; Facing the World; The Cash Boy; Making His Way; Tony the Tramp; Joe's Luck; Do and Dare; Only an Irish Boy; Sink or Swim; A Cousin's Conspiracy; Andy Gordon; Bob Burton; Harry Vane; Hector's Inheritance; Mark Mason's Triumph; Sam's Chance; The Telegraph Boy; The Young Adventurer; The Young Outlaw; The Young Salesman, and Luke Walton.

TRY AND TRUST

CHAPTER I

AROUND THE BREAKFAST TABLE

"WELL, wife," said Mr. Benjamin Stanton, as he sat down to a late breakfast, "I had a letter from Ohio yesterday."

"From Ohio? Who should write you from Ohio? Anyone I know?"

"My sister Margaret, you remember, moved out there with her husband ten years ago."

"Oh, it's from her, is it?" said Mrs. Stanton, indifferently.

"No," said her husband, with momentary gravity. "It's from a Dr. Kent, who attended her in her last illness. Margaret is dead!"

"Dear me!" returned Mrs. Stanton; "and I am just out of mourning for my aunt. Do you think it will be necessary for us to go into mourning for your sister?"

"No, I think not," said her husband. "Margaret has lived away from us so long, and people won't know that we have had a death in the family unless we mention it."

"Was that all the letter said—about the death, I mean?"

"Why, no," said Mr. Stanton, with a little frown. "It seems Margaret left a child—a boy of fourteen; and, as she left no property, the doctor suggests that I should send for the boy and assume the care of him."

"Upon my word!" said Mrs. Stanton; "you'll find yourself in business if you undertake to provide for all the beggars' brats that apply to you for assistance."

"You must remember that you are speaking of my sister's child," said Mr. Stanton, who, cold and selfish and worldly as he was, had some touch of decency about him, and did not relish the term "beggars' brats," as applied to one so nearly related to him.

"Well, call him what you like," said his wife; "only don't be so foolish as to go to spending your money on him when our children need all we have. There's Maria needs a new dress immediately. She says all the girls at Signor Mandalini's dancing academy dress elegantly, and she's positively ashamed to appear in any of her present dresses."

"How much will it cost?" asked Mr. Stanton, opening his pocketbook.

"You may hand me seventy-five dollars. I think I can make that do."

Without a word of remonstrance, the money was placed in her hand.

"I want some money, too," said Tom Stanton.

"What do you want it for, Tom?"

"Oh, some of the fellows are getting up a club. It's going to be a select affair, and of course each of us has got to contribute some money."

"Whose idea is it?"

"Well, Sam Paget was the first boy that mentioned it."

"Whose son is he?"

"His father belongs to the firm of Paget, Norwood & Co. He's awful rich."

"Yes, it is one of our first families," said Mr. Stanton, with satisfaction. "Is he a friend of yours, Tom?"

"Oh, yes, we're quite intimate."

"That's right!" said his father, approvingly. "I am glad you choose your friends so well. That's one of the

principal reasons I have for sending you to an expensive school, to get you into good society."

"Yes, father, I understand," said Tom. "You won't find me associating with common boys. I hold my head a little too high for that, I can tell you."

"That's right, my boy," said Mr. Stanton, with satisfaction. "And now how much money do you want for this club of yours?"

"Well," said Tom, "thirty or forty dollars."

"Isn't that considerable?" said his father.

"Well, you see, father, I want to contribute as much as any of the boys. It would seem mean if I didn't. We don't want to let in any out of our own set."

"That's true," said Mr. Stanton; "I approve of that. It's all very well to talk about democracy, but I believe in the higher orders keeping by themselves."

"Then you'll give me the money, father?" said Tom.

"Yes, Tom, there's forty dollars. It's more than I ought to spare, but I am determined you shall stand as good a chance as any of your schoolfellows. They shan't be able to say that your father stints you in anything that your position requires."

"Thank you, father," said Tom, pocketing the two twenty-dollar bills with great satisfaction.

The fact was that Tom's assessment amounted to only twenty dollars, but he thought it would be a good excuse for getting more out of his father.

Mr. Stanton was a vain, worldly man. He was anxious to obtain an entrance into the best society. For this reason, he made it a point to send his children to the most expensive schools; trusting to their forming fashionable acquaintances, through whom his whole family might obtain recognition in those select circles for which he cherished a most undemocratic respect. For this reason it was that, though not naturally liberal, he had opened his purse willingly at the demands of Mrs. Stanton and Tom.

"Well," said Mrs. Stanton, after Tom's little financial affair had been adjusted, "what are you going to write? Of course you won't think of sending for your nephew?"

"By no means. He is much better off where he is. I shall write Dr. Kent that he is old enough to earn his own living, and I shall recommend that he be bound out to some farmer or mechanic in the neighborhood. It is an imposition to expect, because I am tolerably well off, that it is my duty to support other people's children. My own are entitled to all I can do for them."

"That's so, father," said Tom, who was ready enough to give his assent to any proposition of a selfish nature. "Charity begins at home."

With Tom, by the way, it not only began at home, but it ended there, and the same may be said of his father. From time to time Mr. Stanton's name was found in the list of donors to some charitable object, provided his benevolence was likely to obtain sufficient publicity.

"I suppose," continued Tom, "this country cousin of mine wears cowhide boots and overalls, and has got rough, red hands like a common laborer. I wonder what Sam Paget would say if I should introduce such a fellow to him as my cousin. I rather guess he wouldn't want to be quite so intimate with me as he is now."

If anything had been needed, this consideration would have been sufficient to deter Mr. Stanton from sending for his nephew. He could not permit the social standing of his family to be compromised.

Maria, too, who had been for some time silent, here contributed to strengthen the effect of Tom's words.

"Yes," said she, "and Laura Brooks, my most intimate friend, who is shocked at anything vulgar or countrified—I wouldn't have her know that I have such a cousin—oh, not for the world!"

"There will be no occasion for it," said her father, decidedly. "I shall write to this Dr. Kent, explaining to

him my views and wishes, and how impossible it is for me to do as he so inconsiderately suggests."

"It's the wisest thing you can do, Mr. Stanton," said his wife, who was to the full as selfish as her husband.

"What is his name, father?" asked Maria.

"Whose name?"

"The boy's."

"Herbert Mason."

"Herbert? I thought it might be Jonathan, or Zeke, or some such name. Herbert isn't at all countrified."

"No," said Tom, slyly; "of course not. We all know why you like that name."

"Oh, you're mighty wise, Mr. Tom!"

"It's because you like Herbert Dartmouth; but it isn't any use. He's in love with Lizzie Graves."

"You seem to know all about it," said Maria.

"Of course I do," said Tom; "I ought to, for he told me so himself."

"I don't believe it!" said Maria, ready to cry.

"Well, you needn't; but it's so."

"Be quiet, children," said Mrs. Stanton. "Thomas, you mustn't plague your sister."

"Don't take it so hard, Maria," said Tom, in rather an aggravating tone. "There's other boys you could get. I guess you could get Jim Gorham for a beau."

"I wouldn't have him," said Maria. "His face is all covered with freckles."

"Enough of this quarreling, children," said Mrs. Stanton. "I hope," she continued, addressing her husband, "you won't fail to write at once. They might be sending on the boy, and we should be in a pretty predicament."

"I will write at once. I don't know but I ought to inclose some money."

"I don't see why you need to."

"Perhaps I had better, as this is the last I intend to do for him."

"At any rate, it won't be necessary to send much."

"How much?"

"Five dollars will do, I should think."

"Perhaps it will be best to send ten dollars," said Mr. Stanton. "People are unreasonable, you know, and they might charge me with meanness if I sent less."

"Then make it ten. It's only for once. I hope that will be the last we shall hear of him."

Mr. Stanton had been made rich by a series of lucky speculations, and he was at present carrying on a large wholesale store downtown. He had commenced with small means twenty years before, and for some years had advanced slowly, until the tide of fortune set in and made him rich. His present handsome residence he had only occupied three years, having moved to it from one of much smaller pretensions on Bleecker street. Tom and Maria were forbidden to speak of their former home to their present fashionable acquaintances, and this prohibition they were likely to observe, having inherited to the full the worldly spirit which actuated their parents.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCING THE HERO

If my young readers do not find the town of Waverley on the map of Ohio, they may conclude that it was too small to attract the notice of the map makers. The village is small, consisting of about a dozen houses, a church, a schoolhouse, and, as a matter of course, one of that well-known class of stores in which everything required for the family is sold, from a dress pattern to a pound of sugar.

In one of the houses, near the church, lived Dr. Kent, whose letter has already been referred to. He was a skillful

physician, and a very worthy man. But chance had directed him to a healthy and sparsely settled neighborhood, where he was able only to earn a respectable livelihood, and indeed found himself compelled to economize at times when he would have liked to indulge himself in expense.

When Mrs. Mason died the sale of her furniture barely realized enough to defray the expenses of her funeral. Herbert, her only son, was left wholly unprovided for. Dr. Kent, knowing that he had a rich uncle in New York, invited Herbert to come to his house, and make it his home till his uncle should send for him.

Herbert was a handsome, well-grown boy of fourteen, and a general favorite in the village. While his mother lived he had done all he could to lighten her tasks, and he grieved deeply for her loss now that she was gone. His father had ten years before failed in business in the city of New York, and, in a fit of depression, had emigrated to this obscure country village, where he had invested the few hundred dollars remaining to him in a farm, from which he was able to draw a scanty income. Being a man of liberal education, he had personally superintended the education of his son till his death, two years before, so that Herbert's attainments were considerably in advance of those of other boys of his age in the neighborhood. He knew something of Latin and French, which made him looked upon as quite a model of learning by his playmates. After his father's death he had continued the daily study of the languages, so that he was able to read ordinary French with nearly as much ease as if it were English. Though studious, he was not a bookworm, but was distinguished in athletic sports.

Herbert was frank, manly and generous in his disposition, but proud and high-spirited also, and perhaps these qualities were sometimes carried to excess. He would not allow himself to be imposed upon if he could help it. Being strong, he was always able to maintain his rights, but never

abused his strength by making it the instrument of tyrannizing over weaker boys.

Of course Herbert felt somewhat anxious as to his future prospects. He knew that the doctor had written to his uncle Benjamin about him, and he hoped that he might be sent for to New York, having a great curiosity to see the city, of which he had heard so much.

"Have you heard from my uncle, Dr. Kent?" he inquired, a few days after the scene recorded in our first chapter.

His question was prompted by seeing the doctor coming into the yard with an open letter in his hand.

"Yes," said Dr. Kent, with troubled expression.

"What does Uncle Benjamin say?" asked our young hero, eagerly.

"Nothing very encouraging, Herbert, I am sorry to say," returned the doctor. "However, here is the letter."

Herbert received the letter from the doctor's hands, and read it with feelings of mortification and anger.

Here it is:

DEAR SIR:—I have to acknowledge yours of the 10th inst. I regret to hear of my sister's decease. I regret, also, to hear that her son Herbert is left without a provision for his support. My brother-in-law I cannot but consider culpable in neglecting to lay up something during his life upon which his widow and son might depend. I suspect that he must have lived with inconsiderate extravagance.

As for myself, I have a family of my own to provide for, and the expense of living in a city like this is very great. In justice to them, I do not feel that it would be right for me to incur extra expense. You tell me that he is now fourteen and a stout boy. He is able, I should think, to earn his own living. I should recommend that he be bound out to a farmer or mechanic. To defray any

little expenses that may arise, I inclose ten dollars, which I hope he may find serviceable.

Yours, etc.,

BENJAMIN STANTON.

“Well, Herbert, what do you think of it?”

“I think,” said Herbert, hotly, “that I don’t want to have anything to do with an uncle who could write such a letter as that.”

“He doesn’t seem to write with much feeling,” acknowledged the doctor.

“Feeling!” repeated Herbert; “he writes as if I were a beggar, and asked charity. Where is the money he inclosed, Dr. Kent?”

“I have it here in my vest pocket. I was afraid it would slip out of the letter, and so took care of it.”

“Will you let me send it back to my uncle?”

“Send it back?”

“Yes, Dr. Kent; I don’t want any of his charity, and I’ll tell him so.”

“I am afraid, Herbert, that you are giving way to your pride.”

“But isn’t it a proper pride, doctor?”

“I hardly know what to say, Herbert. You must remember, however, that, as you are left quite unprovided for, even this small sum may be of use to you.”

“It isn’t the smallness of the sum that I mind,” said Herbert. “If Uncle Benjamin had written a kind letter, or showed the least feeling in it for me, or for—for mother (his voice faltered a moment), I would have accepted it thankfully. But I couldn’t accept money thrown at me in that way. He didn’t want to give it to me, I am sure, and wouldn’t if he hadn’t felt obliged to.”

Dr. Kent paced the room thoughtfully. He respected Herbert’s feelings, but he saw that it was not wise for him to indulge them.

"I will tell you what to do, Herbert," he said, after a while. "You can accept this money as a loan, and repay it when you are able."

"With interest?"

"Yes, with interest, if you prefer it."

"I shall be willing to accept it on those terms," said Herbert; "but I want my uncle to understand it."

"You may write to your uncle to that effect, if you like."

"Very well, Dr. Kent. Then I will write at once."

"You will find some paper in my desk, Herbert. I suppose you will not object to my seeing your letter."

"You won't expect me to show much gratitude, I hope?"

"I won't insist upon it, Herbert," said the doctor.

Herbert in about half an hour submitted the following note to the doctor's inspection.

"UNCLE BENJAMIN," so the letter commenced, "Dr. Kent has just shown me your reply to his letter about me. You seem to think I wish you to support me, which is not the case. All I should have asked was your influence to help me in obtaining a situation in the city, where I might support myself. I am willing to work, and shall probably find some opportunity here. The ten dollars which you inclose I will accept *as a loan*, and will repay you as soon as I am able, *with interest*."

"HERBERT MASON."

"Will that do?" asked Herbert.

Dr. Kent smiled.

"You were careful not to express any gratitude, Herbert," he said.

"Because I didn't feel any," returned Herbert, promptly. "I feel grateful to you, Dr. Kent, for your great kindness. I wish I could pay you for that. I shall never

forget how you attended my mother in her sickness when there was small prospect of your being paid."

"My dear boy," said the doctor, "if you wish to repay me, you can do it a hundred times over by growing up a good and honorable man; one upon whom your mother in heaven can look down with grateful joy, if it is permitted her to watch your progress here."

"I will do my best, doctor," said Herbert, much moved.

"The world is all before you," proceeded Dr. Kent. "You may not achieve a brilliant destiny. It is permitted to few to do that. But whether your sphere is wide or narrow, you may exert an influence for good, *and leave the world better for your having lived in it.*"

"I hope it may be so," said Herbert, thoughtfully. "When I am tempted to do wrong, I will think of my mother."

"It is the very best thing you can do, Herbert. And now for your plans. I wish I were in a situation to have you remain with me."

"I ought to be at work," said Herbert, "as I have my living to get. I want you to take that ten dollars, doctor, as part payment of the debt I owe you."

"I can't do that, Herbert, not even to oblige you. You were too proud to accept a favor from your uncle. You will not be too proud to accept one from me?"

"No, doctor, I am not too proud for that. You are my friend, and my uncle cares nothing for me."

When Herbert's letter reached New York his uncle felt a momentary shame, for he saw that his nephew had rightfully interpreted his own selfishness and lack of feeling, and he could not help involuntarily admiring the independent spirit which would not allow him to accept the proffered money except as a loan. But mingled with his shame was a feeling of relief, as he foresaw that Herbert's pride would not suffer him to become a burden upon him in the future.

CHAPTER III

A COLLISION

It was a week later when an incident befell Herbert which brought him into collision with a man who was destined to have some influence over his future life.

A neighboring farmer, for whom he had occasionally gone on errands, asked Herbert if he would take his horse and drive over to the Mill village to get some corn ground. Herbert was glad to accept this proposal, not only because he was to receive twenty-five cents for so doing, but also because he was fond of driving a horse.

He was only about a mile from the Mill village, when he saw approaching him a man in a light open buggy. Herbert perceived at once that the driver was a stranger. To tell the truth, he was not very favorably impressed by his appearance. The man was very dark, with black hair and an unshaven beard of three days' growth, which did not set off his irregular and repulsive features. His mouth, partly open, revealed several yellow tusks, stained with tobacco juice.

Just at this point the middle of the road was much better than the sides, which sloped considerably, terminating in gullies which were partly full from the recent rains. The road was wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other, if each veered to the side.

Herbert observed that the buggy was kept in the center of the road, and that the driver appeared to have no intention of turning out.

"What does he mean?" thought our hero. "He cannot expect me to do the whole of the turning out. I will turn out my half, and he must do the same."

Accordingly he turned partially to one side, as much

as could be reasonably expected, and quietly awaited the approach of the man in the buggy. The latter still kept the center of the road, and did not turn out his carriage at all. As soon as it was close at hand the driver leaned forward and exclaimed angrily:

"Turn out, boy!"

If he expected that Herbert would be intimidated by his tone, he was much mistaken. Our hero was bold, and not easily frightened. He looked quietly in the man's face, and said composedly, "I have turned out."

"Then turn out more, you young vagabond! Do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir, I hear you, and should if you didn't speak half so loud."

"Curse your impudence! I tell you, turn out more!" exclaimed the stranger, becoming more and more angry. He supposed he could browbeat a boy into doing whatever he chose to dictate. But he had met his match.

"I have already given you half the road," said Herbert, firmly, "and I don't intend to give you any more."

"You don't, eh? Young man, how old are you?"

"I am fourteen."

"I should think you were forty by the airs you put on."

"Is it putting on airs to insist on my rights?" asked our hero.

"Your rights!" retorted the other, laughing contemptuously.

"Yes, my rights," returned Herbert, quietly. "I have a right to half the road, and I have taken it. If I turn out any more I shall go into the gully."

"That makes no difference. A wetting won't do you any harm. Your impudence needs cooling."

"That may be," said Herbert, who did not choose to get angry; "but I object to the wetting, and as this wagon is not mine I do not choose to upset it."

"You are the most insolent young scamp I ever came across," exclaimed the other, furiously. "I've a good mind to give you something worse than a wetting."

"Such as what?" asked our hero, coolly.

In reply the man flourished his whip significantly.

"Perhaps you wouldn't like to feel it."

"No, I don't think I should," said Herbert.

The stranger handled his whip, eying our hero viciously at the same time, as if it would have afforded him uncommon pleasure to lay it over his back. But there was something in the look of our hero which unconsciously cowed him, and, much as he wished to strike him, he held back.

"Well, you've a cool hand," he said, after a moment's hesitation.

To this our hero did not see fit to make any reply. But he grasped his own whip a little tighter. So brutal had been the tone assumed by the stranger that he was not sure but he might proceed to carry out his threat and lay the whip over his back. He determined, in that case, to give him as good as he sent.

"Once more," demanded the stranger, furiously, "are you going to turn out?"

"No," said the boy, decidedly.

"Then —— I'll run you down."

So saying, he brought the whip violently on the horse's back. The latter gave a convulsive spring forward. But his driver had not taken into consideration that the farm-wagon was the stronger of the two vehicles, and that in any collision the buggy must come off second best. So it happened that a wheel of the buggy was broken, and the driver, in the shock, thrown sprawling into a puddle on the other side of the road. The wagon suffered no damage, but the old horse, terrified, set off at a rapid pace. Herbert looked back to see if the stranger was injured, but seeing that he had already picked himself up un-

wounded, but decidedly dirty, he concluded to keep on his way to the mill.

The driver of the overturned vehicle was considerably more angry than hurt at this catastrophe. It chafed his pride not a little to think that, after all his vaunts, the boy had got the better of him. For a man of forty-five to be worsted by a boy of fourteen was, it must be confessed, a little mortifying.

No one feels particularly dignified or good-natured when he is picking himself out of a mud puddle. Our black-haired acquaintance proved no exception. He shook his fist at the receding wagon and its occupant—a demonstration of defiance which our hero did not witness, his back being now turned to his late opponent.

Mr. Abner Holden—for this was the stranger's name—next turned his attention to the buggy, which had been damaged to some extent, and so was likely to involve him in expense. Meanwhile, as it was no longer in a fit state for travel, he must contrive some way to have it carried back to the stable, and, unless he could procure another vehicle, perform the rest of the journey on foot.

Luckily some men in a neighboring field had witnessed the collision, and, supposing their services might be required, were now present to lend their aid.

"Pretty bad accident," remarked one of them. "That ere wheel'll need considerable tinkering afore it's fit for use. How came you to get it broke so, squire?"

"A little rascal had the impudence to dispute the road with me, and would not turn out at my bidding."

"Wouldn't turn out? Seems to me from the marks of the wheels you must have been drivin' along in the middle of the road."

"Well, there was room enough for the boy to turn out one side," said Holden, doggedly.

"You are slightly mistaken, stranger," said the other, who was disgusted at the traveler's unreasonableness.

"There wasn't room; as anyone can see that's got eyes in his head. Didn't the youngster turn out at all?"

"Yes," snapped Holden, not relishing the other's free speech.

"Then it seems you were the one that wouldn't turn out. If you had been a leetle more accommodating, this accident couldn't have happened. Fair play's my motto. If a feller meets you halfway, it's all you have a right to expect. I reckon it'll cost you a matter of ten dollars to get that ere buggy fixed."

Holden looked savagely at the broken wheel, but that didn't mend matters.

"What would you advise me to do about it?"

"You will have to leave the buggy where it is just now. Where did you get it?"

"Over at the Mill village."

"Well, you'd better lead the horse back—'tain't more'n a mile—get another wagon, and tell 'em to send for this."

"Well, perhaps that is the best way."

"Where was you goin'?"

"Over to Waverley."

"That's where the boy came from."

"What boy?"

"The boy that upset you."

"What is his name?" asked Abner Holden, scowling.

"His name is Herbert Mason, son of the Widder Mason that died two or three weeks since. Poor boy, he's left alone in the world."

"Where's he stopping?" asked Holden.

"Dr. Kent took him in after the funeral, so I heard; but the selectmen of Waverley are trying to find him a place where he can earn his own livin'. He's a smart, capable boy, and I guess he can do most a man's work."

Abner Holden looked thoughtful. Some plan had suggested itself to him which appeared to yield him satisfac-

tion, for he began to look decidedly more comfortable, and he muttered to himself, "I'll be even with him *yet*."

"If I could get somebody to go back with this horse, I'd walk to Waverley. Are you very busy?"

"Well, I don't know but I could leave off for a short time," said the other, cautiously. "Work's pretty drivin', to be sure. What do you calc'late to pay?"

"How much would it be worth?"

"Well, there's the walk, and then again there's the time."

"You can mount the horse going."

"I guess fifty cents'll about pay me."

Mr. Holden took out his pocketbook and paid the required sum.

"By the way," he said, as if incidentally, "who is the chairman of the selectmen in Waverley?"

"You ain't thinkin' of takin' that boy, be you?"

"I've had enough to do with him; I don't want ever to lay eyes on him again."

"Well, I dunno as I should, if I was you."

"You haven't answered my question yet," said Holden.

"Oh, about the cheermen of the selectmen. It's Captain Joseph Ross."

"Where does he live?"

"A leetle this side of the village. You'll know the house well enough. It's a large, square house painted white, with a well-sweep in front."

Abner Holden turned to walk toward Waverley. It happened that he needed a boy, and for more reasons than one he thought he should like to have Herbert bound to him. Herbert, as he had noticed, was a stout boy, and he could probably get a good deal of work out of him. Then, again, it would be gratifying to him to have our hero in subjection to him. He could pay him off then, ten times over, for his insolence.

"I'll break his proud spirit," thought Abner Holden. "He'll find he's got a master, if I get hold of him."

Mr. Holden resolved to wait on Captain Ross at once, and conclude arrangements with him to take Herbert before our hero had returned from the Mill village.

With the help of a handkerchief dipped into a crystal stream at the roadside, Abner Holden succeeded in effacing some of the muddy stains upon his coat and pantaloons, and at length got himself into presentable trim for calling upon a "selectman."

At length he came in sight of the house which had been described to him as that of Captain Ross. There was a woman at the well-sweep, drawing water.

"Does Captain Ross live here?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir."

"Is he at home?"

"He's over in the three-acre lot. Was you wantin' to see him?"

"I should like to. Is the field far away?"

"No, it's just behind the house."

"Then I guess I'll go and find him."

Mr. Holden crossed a mowing-field, and then found himself at the edge of the three-acre lot. The captain was superintending one or two hired men, and, as he had his coat off, had probably been assisting them.

"Captain Ross?" said Abner Holden, interrogatively.

"That's my name."

"You are chairman of the selectmen, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I understand you have a boy you want to bind out."

"I reckon you mean Herbert Mason."

"Yes, I believe that's the name I heard."

"What is your business?"

"I keep a store, but I should want him to work on land part of the time."

"Do you live hereabouts?"

"Over at Cranston."

"If you'll come to the house, we'll talk the matter over."

The boy's a good boy, and we want to get a good place for him. His mother was a widder, and he's her only son. He's a smart, capable lad, and good to work."

"I've no doubt he will suit me. I'll take him on your recommendation."

"We should want him to go to school winters. He's a pretty good scholar already. His father was a larned man, and used to teach him before he died."

"I'll agree to send him to school in the winter for the next two years," said Holden, "and will give him board and clothes, and when he's twenty-one, a freedom suit and a hundred dollars. Will that do?"

"I don't know but that's reasonable," said Captain Ross, slowly. "The boy's a bit high-spirited, but if you manage him right I guess you'll like him."

"I'll manage him!" thought Abner Holden. "Can I take him with me to-morrow?" he asked. "I don't come this way very often."

"Well, I guess that can be arranged."

"In the meantime," said Holden, afraid that the prize might slip through his fingers, "suppose we make out the papers. I suppose you have full authority in the matter."

Captain Ross had no objection, and thus poor Herbert was unconsciously delivered over to the tender mercies of a man who had very little love for him.

CHAPTER IV

A DISAGREEABLE SURPRISE

AFTER his collision, Herbert hurried on to the mill, intent upon making up for lost time. He was satisfied with having successfully maintained his rights; and as he had no reason to suppose he should ever again see his unreasonable opponent, dismissed him from his thoughts.

On reaching the mill he found he should have to remain an hour or two before he could have his grain ground. He was not sorry for this, as it would give him an opportunity to walk around the village.

"I wish," he thought, "I could get a place in one of the stores here. There's more going on than there is in Waverley, and I could go over Sundays to see Dr. Kent's family."

On the spur of the moment he resolved to inquire if some of the storekeepers did not require help. There was a large dry goods store, kept by Beckford & Keyes. He entered, and inquired for the senior partner.

"Mr. Beckford is not in," said the clerk. "Mr. Keyes is standing at that desk."

Herbert went up to the desk, and said inquiringly, "Mr. Keyes?"

"That is my name," said that gentleman, pleasantly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I am in search of a place," said our hero, "and I thought you might have a vacancy here."

"We have none just at present," said Mr. Keyes; "but it is possible we may have in a few weeks. Where do you live? Not in the village, I suppose."

"No, sir," said Herbert, and a shadow passed over his face. "My mother died three weeks since, and I am now stopping at the house of Dr. Kent."

"Dr. Kent—ah, yes. He is an excellent man."

"He is," said Herbert, warmly. "He has been very kind to me."

"What is your name?"

"Herbert Mason."

"Then, Herbert, I will promise to bear you in mind. I will note down your name and address, and as soon as we have a vacancy I will write you."

"Thank you," said Herbert.

He left the store feeling quite encouraged. Even if

the chance never amounted to anything, the kind words and manner of the storekeeper gave him courage to hope that he would meet with equal kindness from others. Herbert left the store, feeling that he should consider himself truly fortunate if he could obtain a place in such an establishment.

After sauntering about the village a little longer, and buying a stick of candy for little Mary Kent, the doctor's only daughter, who was quite attached to Herbert, our hero got back to the mill in time to receive his bags of meal, with which he was soon on his way homeward.

About the place where he had met Mr. Holden he was hailed by a man at work in the field, the same who had taken back that gentleman's horse to the stable.

"Well, boy, you had a kind of scrimmage, didn't you, coming over?"

"Did you see it?" asked Herbert.

"Yes," said the other, grinning. "I seed the other feller in the mud puddle. He was considerably riled about it."

"It was his own fault. I gave him half the road."

"I know it; but there's some folks that want more than their share."

"Was his buggy broken? I don't know but I ought to have stopped to help him."

"His wheel got broken. It'll cost him a matter of ten dollars to fix it."

"I'm sorry for that," said Herbert; "but I can't see that I was to blame in the matter. If I had turned out as he wanted me to, I should have tipped over, and as the wagon didn't belong to me, I didn't think it right to risk it."

"Of course not. You wasn't called on to give in to such unreasonableness."

"Where did the man go?"

"He concluded to walk on to Waverley, and hired me

to take the horse back to the stable. He wanted to know who you were."

"Did he?"

"Maybe he's goin' to sue you for damages."

"I don't believe he'll get much if he does," laughed our hero. "My property is where he can't get hold of it."

"Ho! ho!" laughed the other, understanding the joke.

After this conversation Herbert continued on his way, and, after delivering the grain, took his way across the fields to his temporary home. He entered by the back yard. Little Mary ran to meet him.

"Have oo come back, Herbert?" she said. "Where have oo been?"

"Been to buy Mary some candy," he said, lifting her up and kissing her.

"Whose horse is that at the gate?" asked Herbert, as the doctor's wife entered the room.

"It belongs to Captain Ross," she said. "He has come on business connected with you."

"Connected with me!" repeated Herbert, in surprise.

"Yes, my dear boy, I am afraid we must make up our minds to lose you."

"Has he found a place for me?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, he has bound you out to a man in Cranston."

"I am sorry," said Herbert.

"I shall be sorry to have you go, Herbert, but I thought you wanted to go."

"So I do; but by waiting a few weeks I could get a place in Beckford & Keyes' store, at the Mill village."

"What makes you think so?"

Herbert detailed his interview of the morning. Just at this moment the doctor entered the kitchen.

"Have you told him?" he inquired, looking at his wife.

"Yes, and he says that but for this he might have got a chance to go into Beckford's store at Mill village."

"I am sorry for this. They are good men, and he

would have been near us, while Cranston is forty miles away."

"Who is the man that wants me?" asked Herbert.

"A Mr. Holden. He is in the other room with Captain Ross. It was all arranged before they came. He wants you to go with him to-morrow morning."

"So soon?" said Herbert, in dismay.

"Yes. At first he wished you to set off with him this afternoon; but I told him you could not be ready."

"Quite impossible," said Mrs. Kent. "Some of Herbert's clothes are in the wash, and I can't have them ready till evening."

"You had better come into the other room, Herbert. I will introduce you to your new employer."

Herbert followed the doctor into the sitting room. His first glance rested on Captain Ross, whom he knew. He went up and shook hands with him. Next he turned to Mr. Holden, and, to his inexpressible astonishment and dismay, recognized his opponent of the morning.

"Mr. Holden, Herbert," introduced the doctor. "Mr. Holden, this is the boy we have been speaking of."

"I have seen Mr. Holden before," said Herbert, coldly.

"Yes," said Mr. Holden, writhing his disagreeable features into an unpleasant smile. "We have met before."

Dr. Kent looked from one to the other in surprise.

"Our acquaintance doesn't date very far back," said Mr. Holden. "We met this morning between here and the Mill village."

"Indeed," said the doctor; "you passed each other, I suppose."

"Well, no, I can't say we did exactly," said Mr. Holden. "We tried to, but the road being narrow, there was a collision, and I came off second best."

"I hope there was no accident."

"Oh, nothing to speak of. I got tipped out, and my clothes, as you may observe, suffered some."

"You must excuse my not stopping to inquire if I could help you," said Herbert; "but my horse was frightened by the collision, and I could not easily stop him."

"Oh, it's of no consequence," said Mr. Holden, in an offhand manner.

"But where is your horse?" asked Captain Ross. "I think you were walking when you came to my house."

"I sent it back to the village by a man I met on the road, my buggy being disabled."

"Your carriage wasn't much injured, I hope."

"Oh, no, not much."

"I don't see exactly how it could happen," said Captain Ross. "I thought the road from here to the Mill village was broad enough for carriages to pass each other."

"I didn't dream," said Mr. Holden, not noticing this remark, "that the young man I had engaged was my young acquaintance of the morning."

Herbert looked at him, puzzled by his change of manner—a change so sudden that he suspected its genuineness.

The more he thought of it the more unwilling he felt to live with Mr. Holden. But could it be avoided? He resolved to try. He accordingly told the doctor and Captain Ross of the promise that Mr. Keyes had made.

"It would be a good place," said the captain; "but it ain't certain. Now here's Mr. Holden ready to take you at once."

"If I was at the Mill village I could come over and see my friends here now and then. Besides, I think I should like being in a store."

"Oh, I've got a store, too," said Mr. Holden, "and I should expect you to tend there part of the time. I don't think I can let you off, my young friend."

Soon after, Mr. Holden and Captain Ross rose to go.

"I'll call round for my young friend about nine to-morrow morning," said Abner Holden.

"We will endeavor to have him ready," said the doctor.

After they went away Herbert wandered about in not the best of spirits. He was convinced that he should not be happy with Mr. Holden, against whom he had conceived an aversion, founded partly upon the occurrences of the morning, and partly on the impression made upon him by Abner Holden's personal appearance.

CHAPTER V

THE ENVELOPE

HERBERT woke up early the next morning, and a feeling of sadness came over him as he reflected that it was his last morning in Waverley. New scenes and new experiences usually have a charm for a boy, but Mr. Holden's disagreeable face rose before him, and the prospect seemed far from tempting.

When he came downstairs he found Mrs. Kent in the kitchen.

"You are up early, Mrs. Kent," said Herbert.

"Yes, Herbert; I want you to have a good breakfast before you go."

It certainly was a nice breakfast. Tender beefsteak, warm biscuit, golden butter, potatoes fried crisp and excellent coffee might have tempted any appetite.

The family had hardly risen from breakfast when the sound of wheels was heard outside.

"It's Mr. Holden," said the doctor, looking from the front window.

"Must we part from you so soon, Herbert?" said Mrs. Kent, affectionately.

"Where oo going, Herbert?" asked little Mary, clinging to his knee.

"Herbert's going away, Mary," said he, stooping and kissing his little friend.

"Herbert musn't go 'way," said the little girl.

"Herbert come back soon, and bring candy for Mary," he said, wishing that his words might come true.

By that time Mr. Holden had entered.

"Little Mary is quite attached to Herbert," said the doctor.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Holden, "that I have no little girls, as Herbert seems fond of them."

Herbert doubted if he could become attached to anyone related to Mr. Holden.

"I'm a bachelor," said Mr. Holden, "though perhaps I ought to be ashamed to say so. If I had had the good fortune early in life to encounter a lady like your good wife here, it might have been different."

"It isn't too late yet, Mr. Holden," said the doctor.

"Well, perhaps not. If Mrs. Kent is ever a widow, I may try my luck."

"What a disagreeable man," thought the doctor's wife, not propitiated by the compliment. "Herbert," she said, "here are a couple of handkerchiefs I bought in the village yesterday. I hope you will find them useful."

"Yes; no doubt he will," said Mr. Holden, laughing. "He will think of you whenever he has a bad cold."

The whole family accompanied Herbert to the road. After kissing Mary and Mrs. Kent, and shaking the doctor by the hand, Herbert jumped into the wagon. Just before the horse started the doctor handed our hero a sealed envelope, saying, "You can open it after a while."

Though, like most boys of his age, Herbert had a great horror of making a baby of himself, he could hardly help crying as he rode up the street and felt that he had parted from his best friends. His eyes filled with tears, which he quietly wiped away with his handkerchief.

"Don't blubber, boy," said Mr. Holden, coarsely.

Herbert was not weak enough to melt into tears at an unkind word. It roused his indignation, and he answered,

shortly, "When you see me blubbering it'll be time enough to speak, Mr. Holden."

"It looked a good deal like it, at any rate," said Abner. "There's nothing to cry about that I can see."

"No, perhaps not," said Herbert; "but there's something to be sorry for."

"Something to be sorry for, is there?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is it?"

"I've left my best friends, and I don't know when I shall see them again."

"Nor I," said Mr. Holden. "But I think it's high time you left them."

"Why?" asked Herbert, indignantly.

"Because they were petting you and making too much of you. You won't get such treatment as that from me."

"I don't expect it," said our hero.

"That's lucky," said Abner Holden, dryly.

Here a sense of the ludicrous came over Herbert as he thought of being Mr. Holden's pet, and he laughed heartily. That gentleman demanded, in a tone of irritation, "What are you making a fool of yourself about?"

"What am I laughing at?" said Herbert.

"Yes," snarled Abner.

"The idea of being your pet," said Herbert, frankly.

Mr. Holden did not appreciate the joke, and said roughly, "You better shut up, if you know what's best for yourself."

Then Abner Holden, thinking suddenly of the envelope which Dr. Kent had placed in Herbert's hand at parting, and feeling curious as to its contents, asked:

"What did the doctor give you as you were starting?"

"It was an envelope."

"I know that; but what was there in it?"

"I haven't looked," said our hero.

"Why don't you open it?"

"I didn't think of it before."

"I suppose there is some present inside."

Herbert decided to open the envelope. He drew out a five-dollar bill, and a few penciled words:

DEAR HERBERT—I would gladly give you more if I had the means. I hope you will use the enclosed money in any way that may be most serviceable to you. You must write to me often. Be a good boy, as you always have been; let your aims be noble, try to do right at all hazards, and may God bless your efforts and make you a good and true man. Such is the prayer of your affectionate friend,

GEORGE KENT.

Herbert read these lines with emotion, and inwardly resolved that he would try to carry out the recommendations laid down. His thoughts were broken in upon by Mr. Holden, whose sharp eyes detected the bank note.

"There's money in the letter, isn't there?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Five dollars."

"Five dollars, hey?" he said. "You'd better give it to me to keep for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Holden; I can take care of it."

"It isn't a good plan for boys to have so large a sum of money in their possession," said Abner Holden.

"Why not?" asked Herbert.

"Because they are likely to spend it improperly."

"Dr. Kent didn't seem to think I was likely to do that."

"No, he trusted you too much."

"I hope it won't prove so."

"You'd better keep out of the way of temptation. You might lose it besides."

"I don't often lose things."

"Come, boy," said Mr. Holden, getting impatient;

"Dr. Kent, no doubt, intended that I should take care of the money for you. You'd better give it up without further trouble."

"Why didn't he give it to you, then?" demanded Herbert.

"He supposed you would give it to me."

"Why didn't he give it to you, then?" demanded Herbert, who had no intention of giving up the money.

"Well, are you going to give me the money?" blustered Abner, taking out his pocketbook to receive it.

"No," said Herbert.

"You'll repent this conduct, young man."

"I don't think I shall," said our hero. "I don't understand why you are so anxious to get hold of the money."

"It is for your good," said Abner.

"I'd rather keep it," said Herbert.

Abner Holden hardly knew what to do. The money was safely stowed away in Herbert's pocket, where he could not very well get at it.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE WAY

By the time they had ridden twenty miles both Herbert and Mr. Holden felt hungry. They approached a broad, low building with a swinging sign and a long piazza in front, which it was easy to see was a tavern.

"Do you feel hungry, boy?" inquired Abner Holden.

"Yes, sir," returned our hero.

"So do I. I think I shall get some dinner here. You can get some too, if you like."

"Thank you, sir."

"Oh, there's no occasion to thank me," said Mr. Hol-

den, dryly. "I shall pay for my dinner, and if you want any, you can pay for yours."

Herbert looked surprised. As he had entered Mr. Holden's employ, he supposed of course that the latter would provide for him, and it certainly seemed mean that he should be compelled to pay for his own dinner.

"How much will it cost?" asked Herbert, at length.

"Thirty-seven cents," was the reply.

It must be remembered that this was in the day of low prices, when gold was at par, and board could be obtained at first-class city hotels for two dollars and a half a day, and in country villages at that amount by the week.

"Thirty-seven cents!" Herbert hardly liked to break in upon his scanty hoard, but in addition to the five dollars which Dr. Kent had given him he had the ten dollars sent him by his uncle, and not only that, but a little loose change which he had earned.

"Well, are you going to get out?" asked Abner Holden.

"Yes, I guess I will."

"Very well," said Holden, who had a reason for being pleased with his decision.

Both went into the tavern. There were two or three loungers on a settle, who gazed at them curiously. One of them appeared to recognize Abner Holden.

"How dy do, Holden?" he said. "Who've you got with you?"

"A boy I've taken," said Holden, shortly.

"A pretty smart-looking boy. Where'd you get him?"

"Over in Waverley. He's got some pretty high notions, but I guess I'll take 'em out of him in time."

"Yes," chuckled the other; "I warrant you will."

Herbert could not avoid hearing what was said. He was not frightened, but inwardly determined that he would do his duty, and then if Mr. Holden saw fit to impose upon him, he would make what resistance he was able.

"I wonder what high notions he means," thought our hero. "If he expects to make a slave of me, he will be mistaken, that's all."

"Sit down there, and I'll go and order dinner," said Mr. Holden, entering.

Just then the landlord greeted Abner Holden.

"I want dinner for two, Mr. Robinson," said Abner.

"For two. You haven't brought your wife along with you, Holden?" he said, jocosely.

"No, I haven't come across any such lady yet. I've got a boy here who is bound to me. And hark you, landlord," he added, in a lower voice that Herbert might not hear, "he will pay you for his dinner out of a five-dollar bill which he has with him. *You needn't give back the change to him, but to me.*"

"Yes, I understand," said the landlord, winking.

"I prefer to keep the money for him. This will give me a chance to get hold of it without any fuss."

"All right."

"If he kept it himself he'd be spending it in some improper way."

"Just so. I'll attend to it."

Now our hero had sharp ears, and he caught enough of this conversation to understand Mr. Holden's plot.

"You shan't take me in this time," he thought.

He opened his pocketbook to see if he had enough small change to pay for his dinner without intrenching upon his bill. There proved to be a quarter and two half dimes, amounting, of course, to thirty-five cents.

"I must change the bill somewhere," he said to himself.

Looking out of the tavern window, he saw the village store nearly opposite. He took his cap and ran over. There was a clerk leaning with his elbows upon the counter, appearing unoccupied.

It occurred to Herbert that he might want some paper and envelopes. He inquired the price.

"We sell the paper at a penny a sheet, and the envelopes will cost you eight cents a package."

"Then you may give me twelve sheets of paper and a package of envelopes," said Herbert.

The package was done up for him, and in payment he tendered the bill.

The clerk gave him back four dollars and eighty cents in change, and he returned to the tavern well pleased with his success. Mr. Holden was in the barroom, taking a glass of "bitters," and had not noticed the absence of our hero.

Dinner was soon ready.

There was some beefsteak and coffee and a whole apple pie. Herbert soon found he stood a poor chance with Abner Holden; that gentleman, being a very rapid eater, managed to appropriate two thirds of the beefsteak and three quarters of the pie.

"Now," said Abner Holden, his eyes twinkling at the thought of our hero's coming discomfiture, "we'll go and settle our bill."

"Very well," said Herbert, quietly.

They entered the public room, and advanced to the bar.

"This boy wants to pay for his dinner, Mr. Robinson," said Abner, significantly.

"How much will it be?" asked Herbert.

"Thirty-seven cents."

Herbert took out of his vest pocket a quarter, a dime and two cents, and handed them over.

To say that Abner Holden looked amazed is not sufficient. He looked disgusted and wronged, and glared at Herbert as if to inquire how he could have the face to outrage his feelings in that way.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the landlord, who was amused at the course affairs had taken.

Herbert suppressed his desire to laugh, and looked as if he had no knowledge of Mr. Holden's plans.

"Where did you get that money?" growled Abner.

"Out of my vest pocket," said Herbert, innocently.

"I know that, but I thought you had only a bill."

"Oh, I got that changed at the store."

"How dared you go over there without my permission?" roared Abner.

"I didn't think it necessary to ask your permission to go across the street."

"Well, you know it now. Don't you go there again without my knowledge."

"Very well, sir."

"Did you buy anything at the store?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was it?"

"Some paper and envelopes."

"Humph!" muttered Abner, discontentedly.

He proceeded to pay his own bill, and in a few minutes got into the wagon and drove off rather sulkily. Herbert saw that Mr. Holden was disturbed by the failure of his little plan, and felt amused rather than otherwise. But when he reflected that he was going to live with this man, and be, to a considerable extent, under his control, he felt inclined to be sad. One thing he resolved, that he would not submit to tyranny. The world was wide, and he felt able to earn his own living.

Meanwhile they were getting over the road, and a few more hours brought them to their journey's end.

Abner Holden's house had no great pretensions to architectural beauty, being about as handsome for a house as Abner Holden was for a man. There was a dilapidated barn, a little to one side, and the yard was littered up with a broken wagon, a woodpile and various odds and ends, giving the whole a very untidy look.

"Is this where you live, Mr. Holden?" asked Herbert, looking about him.

"Yes, and I'm glad to get home. Do you know how to unharness a horse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then jump out and unharness this horse."

Herbert did as directed. Then he took his little trunk and went with it to the back door and knocked.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW HOME

THE door was opened by an elderly woman, rather stout, who acted as Abner Holden's housekeeper. Though decidedly homely, she had a pleasant look, which impressed Herbert favorably. He had feared she might turn out another edition of Mr. Holden.

"Come right in," said Mrs. Bickford, for that was her name. "Let me help you with your trunk."

"Thank you," said Herbert.

"You must be tired," said the housekeeper.

"No, not very," said our hero. "We rode all the way."

"Well, it's tiresome riding, at any rate. You came from Waverley, Mr. Holden tells me."

"Yes."

"And that is more than thirty miles away, isn't it?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"So you've come to help Mr. Holden?" she added.

"Yes, I suppose so," said Herbert, rather seriously.

"What is your name?"

"Herbert Mason."

"I hope, Herbert, we shall make you comfortable."

"Thank you," said Herbert as he perceived that he was to have one friend in Mr. Holden's household.

"Has Mr. Holden generally kept a boy?" he asked.

"Yes, he calculates to keep one most of the time."

"Was he here long?" asked Herbert, in some curiosity.

"Well, no," said the housekeeper, "he didn't stay long."

"How long?"

"He was here 'most a month."

"'Most a month? Didn't he like it?"

"Well, no, he didn't seem to like Mr. Holden much."

Herbert was not much surprised to hear this.

"Have any of the boys that have been here liked Mr. Holden?" he asked.

"I can't say as they have," said Mrs. Bickford, frankly; "and somehow they don't seem to stay long."

"Why didn't they like him?"

"Sh!" said the housekeeper, warningly.

Herbert looked round and saw his employer entering the room.

"Well, boy, have you put up the horse?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you give him some hay?"

"Yes, sir."

"And some grain?"

"No, I didn't know where it was kept. If you'll tell me, I'll do it now."

"No, you needn't. He isn't to have any. He's only a hired horse."

Considering that the hired horse had traveled over thirty miles, Herbert thought he was entitled to some oats; but Mr. Holden was a mean man.

"Where is Herbert to sleep, Mr. Holden?" asked the housekeeper.

"Up garret."

"There's the small corner bedroom in the second story," suggested Mrs. Bickford.

"I guess he won't be too proud to sleep in the garret," said Mr. Holden. "Shall you?" he continued, turning to Herbert.

"Put me where you please," said Herbert, coldly.

"Then it shall be the garret. You can take your trunk up now. Mrs. Bickford will show you the way."

"It is too heavy for you, Herbert," said the housekeeper; "I will help you."

"Oh, he can carry it alone," said Abner Holden. "He isn't a baby."

"I'd rather help him," said the housekeeper, taking one handle of the trunk. "You go first, Herbert. You're young and spry, and can go faster than I."

On the second landing Herbert saw the little bedroom in which the housekeeper wanted to put him.

"You could have had that bedroom just as well as not," said Mrs. Bickford. "It's never used. But Mr. Holden's rather contrary and as hard to turn as a——"

"A mule?" suggested Herbert, laughing.

"It's pretty much so," said the housekeeper, joining in the laugh.

They went up a narrow staircase and emerged into a dark garret, running the whole length of the house without a partition. The beams and rafters were visible.

"It isn't very pleasant," said the housekeeper.

"No," said Herbert, "I don't think it is."

"I declare, it's too bad you should have to sleep here."

"I guess I can stand it," said our hero, "though I should rather be downstairs."

"I'll bring up the trap and set it before you go to bed," said Mrs. Bickford.

"The trap," repeated Herbert, in surprise.

"Yes; there's rats about, and I suppose you'd rather have a trap than a cat."

"Yes; the cat would be about as bad as the rats."

At this moment Abner Holden's voice was heard and Mrs. Bickford hurried down, followed by our hero.

"I thought you were going to stay up there all day," said Mr. Holden. "What were you about up there?"

"That is my business," said Mrs. Bickford, shortly.

The housekeeper was independent, and, knowing that she could readily obtain another situation, did not choose

to be browbeaten by Mr. Holden. He was quite aware of her value, and he put some constraint over himself in the effort not to be rude to her. With Herbert, however, it was different. *He* was bound to him, and therefore in his power. Abner Holden exulted in this knowledge, and with the instinct of a petty tyrant determined to let Herbert realize his dependence.

"You may go out and saw some wood," he said.

"What wood shall I saw?"

"The wood in the woodpile, stupid."

"Very well, sir," said our hero, quietly.

Herbert thought Mr. Holden was losing no time in setting him to work. However, he had resolved to do his duty, unpleasant as it might be, as long as Abner Holden only exacted what was reasonable. Mrs. Bickford, however, said a word in his favor.

"I've got wood enough to last till to-morrow, Mr. Holden," she said.

"Well, what of it?"

"It's likely the boy is tired."

"What's he done to make him tired, I should like to know? Ridden thirty miles, and eaten a good dinner!"

"Which I paid for myself," said Herbert.

"What if you did?" said Abner Holden, turning to him. "I suppose you'll eat supper at my expense, and you'd better do something, first, to earn it."

"That I am willing to do."

"Then go out to the woodpile without any more palavering."

"Mr. Holden," said the housekeeper, seriously, after Herbert had gone out, "if you want to keep that boy, I think you had better be careful how you treat him."

"Why do you say that?" demanded Abner. "Has he been saying anything to you about me?"

"No."

"Then why did you say that?"

"Because I can see what kind of a boy he is."

"Well, what kind of a boy is he?" asked Abner, with a sneer.

"He is high-spirited, and will work faithfully if he's treated well, but he won't be imposed upon."

"How do you know that?"

"I can read it in his face. I have had some experience with boys, and you may depend upon it that I am not mistaken."

"He had better do his duty," blustered Abner.

"He *will* do his duty," said the housekeeper, "but there is a duty which you owe to him, as well as he to you."

"This boy is bound to me, Mrs. Bickford—legally bound."

"That may be; but if you don't treat him as he ought to be treated, he will run away, take my word for it."

"If he does, he'll be brought back, take my word for that, Mrs. Bickford. But as to petting and pampering the young rascal I shall do nothing of the kind."

"I don't think you will," said the housekeeper. "However, I've warned you."

"You seem to take a good deal of interest in the boy," said Abner, sneeringly.

"Yes, I do."

"After about half an hour's acquaintance."

"I've known him long enough to see that he's better than the common run of boys, and I hope he'll stay."

"There's no doubt about that," said Abner Holden. "He'll have to stay, whether he wants to or not."

CHAPTER VIII

THE GHOST IN THE ATTIC

AFTER working two hours at the woodpile, Herbert was called in to tea. There was no great variety, Abner Hol-

den not being a bountiful provider, but the bread was sweet and good, and the gingerbread fresh. Herbert made a good meal and Mrs. Bickford looked on approvingly.

After pouring out a cup of tea for Mr. Holden, the housekeeper was about to pour out one for Herbert.

"He don't want any tea," said Abner, noticing the action. "Keep the cup for yourself, Mrs. Bickford."

"What do you mean, Mr. Holden?" asked the housekeeper, in surprise.

"Tea isn't good for a growing boy. A glass of cold water will be best for him."

"I don't agree with you, Mr. Holden," said the housekeeper, decidedly. "Herbert has been hard at work, and needs his tea as much as you or I do."

Therefore, without waiting for his permission, she handed the cup to Herbert, who proceeded to taste it.

Abner Holden frowned, but neither Herbert nor the housekeeper took much notice of it. The latter was somewhat surprised at this new freak on the part of Abner, as he had never tried to deprive any of Herbert's predecessors of tea or coffee. But the fact was, Mr. Holden disliked Herbert, and was disposed to act the petty tyrant over him.

Feeling tired by eight o'clock, Herbert went up to his garret room and undressed himself. An instinct of caution led him to take out the money in his *portemonnaie*, and put it in his trunk, which he then locked, and put the key under the sheet, so that no one could get hold of it without awakening him. This precaution proved to be well taken.

Herbert lay down upon the bed, but did not immediately go to sleep. He could not help thinking of his new home, and the new circumstances in which he was placed. He did not feel very well contented, and felt convinced, from what he had already seen of Mr. Holden, that he should never like him. Then thoughts of his mother, and of her con-

stant and tender love, and the kind face he would never more see on earth, swept over him, and almost unmanned him. To have had her still alive he would have been content to live on dry bread and water. But the thought of his mother's Christian instructions came to him, and he was comforted by the reflection, that whatever happened to him was with the knowledge of his Father in heaven, who would not try him above his strength.

Try and trust! That was almost the last advice his mother had given him, as the surest way of winning the best success.

"Yes," he thought, "I will try and trust, and leave the rest with God."

Meanwhile, Mr. Holden had not been able to keep out of his head the five dollars which he knew Herbert possessed. He was a mean man, and wished to appropriate it to his own use. Besides this, he was a stubborn man, and our hero's resistance only made him the more determined to triumph over his opposition by fair means or foul. It struck him that it would be a good idea to take advantage of our hero's slumber, and take the money quietly from his pocketbook while he was unconscious.

Accordingly, about eleven o'clock, he went softly up the attic stairs with a candle in his hand, and, with noiseless steps, approached the bed. Herbert's regular breathing assured him that he was asleep. Abner Holden took up his pants and felt for his pocketbook. He found it, and drew it out with exultation.

"Aha!" he thought; "I've got it."

But his brief exultation was succeeded by quick disappointment. The pocketbook proved to be empty.

"Curse it!" muttered Abner, "what has the boy done with his money?"

It was at this moment that Herbert, his eyes possibly affected by the light, awoke.

His first feeling was indignation, but the sight of Abner

Holden's disappointed face amused him, and he determined not to reveal his wakefulness, but to watch him.

"Perhaps he's got two pocketbooks," thought Abner.

But in this he was mistaken.

Next he went to Herbert's trunk, and tried it, but found it locked.

"I wonder where he keeps the key."

He searched Herbert's pockets in vain.

"Plague take the young rascal!" he muttered.

Herbert turned in bed, and Abner Holden, fearing that he might wake, and being rather ashamed of his errand, and unwilling to be caught in it, went downstairs.

"Well, he didn't take much," thought our hero. "It's lucky I thought to put the money in my trunk."

"How did you sleep last night, Herbert?" inquired the housekeeper at breakfast.

"Very well, thank you, Mrs. Bickford."

He was resolved not to drop a hint of what had happened, being curious to see if Mr. Holden would make any further attempts. As his employer might find a key that would unlock the trunk, he thought it prudent, during the day, to carry the money about with him.

He hardly knew whether to expect a visit from Abner the next night, but formed a little plan for frightening him if such a visit should take place.

He had in his trunk a fish horn which had been given him by some one in Waverley. This he took out before retiring and hid it under his pillow. It was about nine o'clock when he went to bed, but by considerable effort he succeeded in keeping awake.

About eleven o'clock, Abner Holden, before going to bed himself, decided to make one more attempt to obtain possession of Herbert's money. He reflected that possibly our hero had only put away his money by chance on the previous evening and might have neglected to do so on the present occasion.

Once more he took his candle and, removing his thick-soled shoes, crept softly up the narrow staircase.

But Herbert heard him, and moreover was warned of his visit by the light of the candle. He closed his eyes and awaited his coming in silent expectation.

Abner Holden looked toward the bed. Herbert's eyes were closed and his breathing was deep and regular.

"He's sound asleep," thought Abner, with satisfaction.

He set down the candle on a chair beside the bed and began to examine our hero's pocketbook once more. But it proved to be empty as before. In the pocketbook, however, he found a key, the key, as he supposed, to Herbert's trunk. It was not, however, being only a key which Herbert had picked up in the street. He had put it in his pocket with a view to mislead his employer.

That gentleman uttered a low exclamation of satisfaction when his fingers closed upon the key, never doubting for a moment that it would open the trunk.

Leaving the candle in its place, he rose from his recumbent position, threw the pants on the bed, and went round on the other side, to try the key.

He got down on his knees before the trunk. Suddenly the candle was extinguished and a horrible blast on the fish horn resounded through the garret.

Now, Abner Holden was not a very courageous man. In fact, he was inclined to superstition. He knew that he was engaged in a dishonorable attempt to rob a boy who was placed in his charge, and there is an old proverb that says "conscience makes cowards of us all."

Abner Holden jumped to his feet in dire dismay, and, without stopping to reflect on the probable cause of this startling interruption, "struck a bee line" for the staircase, and descended quicker, probably, than he had ever done before, narrowly escaping tumbling the entire distance.

Herbert had to stuff the bedclothes into his mouth to

keep from bursting into laughter, which would have revealed his agency in producing the mysterious noise.

"I thought I heard a frightful noise last night soon after I went to bed," said Mrs. Bickford, at the breakfast table. "Didn't you hear anything, Mr. Holden?"

"No," said Abner, "I heard nothing. You were probably dreaming."

"Perhaps I was. Didn't you hear anything, Herbert?"

"I sleep pretty sound," said Herbert, quietly.

Abner Holden watched him as he said this, and was evidently more perplexed than ever. But that was the last visit he paid to the garret at night.

CHAPTER IX

EXPOSING A FRAUD

It would be hard to tell what Abner Holden's precise occupation was. He had thirty or forty acres of land but only cultivated enough to produce supplies of vegetables for his own table and grain for his horses. He kept four cows, and had three horses. He had the Yankee propensity for "swapping" and trading horses, generally managing to get the best of the bargain.

But about two months before Herbert came into his employ, he had been overreached and found himself the possessor of a horse of excellent appearance but blind of one eye and with a vicious temper.

One day, about a fortnight after Herbert's arrival, a gentlemanly looking stranger knocked at Abner's door.

The call was answered by the housekeeper.

"Is Mr. Holden at home?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"I should like to see him."

Abner Holden soon made his appearance.

"Mr. Holden," said the stranger, "I am in search of a good family horse. I am told that you have some animals for sale, and called on you, thinking I might get suited."

"You've come to the right place," said Abner, glibly. "I've got just the animal that will suit you."

"I should like to see it."

"He's in the pasture now. If you don't object to walking a short distance, I will show him to you. I feel sure he will suit you."

"Very well, I will go with you."

"This way, then."

The two walked down a green lane at the back of the house to the pasture, where the three horses were grazing.

Now, the blind and vicious horse was much the best looking. He held his head erect, had a graceful form, and was likely to attract favorable notice at first sight.

Abner Holden paused and pointed him out.

"What do you think of that horse, Mr. Richmond?"

"A very good-looking animal," said the stranger, with an approving glance; "but I must explain that I want such an animal as my wife can drive. It is absolutely necessary that he should be good-tempered and gentle. Can you recommend this horse of yours?"

"Yes," said Abner, confidently, "he will just suit you. I did calculate to keep him for my own use, but I'm rather short of money, and I shall have to let him go."

"Could a woman drive him?"

"Oh, no trouble about that," said Abner.

"And he has no serious defect?"

"No."

"Well, that seems satisfactory. I like his appearance. He would look well in harness. What is your price?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars, cash down," said Abner. "He's worth a cool hundred more, but I got him cheap, and can afford to sell him cheap."

The horse had cost Mr. Holden just a hundred and ten dollars, and at this price he considered himself decidedly taken in; but this he did not care to mention.

"Two hundred and fifty dollars!" mused the stranger. "It is a little more than I intended to pay."

"You had better take him," said Abner. "It'll be the best bargain you ever made, I'll warrant. You'll pay cash down, I suppose?"

"Of course."

"Then shall we say it's a bargain?"

"Not quite yet. I'll take till the afternoon to think about it."

"Better decide now. The fact is, Mr. Richmond, I ought not to let the horse go at that figure."

"I think I shall take your horse, but I have agreed to look at another, and must see that first."

"Whose?"

"It belongs to a man named Nichols."

"Sam Nichols?"

"I believe so."

"I wouldn't advise you to have anything to do with him."

"Why not?"

"He's a regular sharper. You can't depend on anything he says."

"Thank you for the caution. I will be on my guard. If I don't come to terms with him I will come round this afternoon and make a bargain with you."

Mr. Holden thought it was hardly politic to urge him farther. With a renewed caution as to dealing with Sam Nichols, he let him go.

"Well," thought Abner, after he was gone, "it will be a pretty good thing if I get rid of Spitfire"—he had named him thus—"for two hundred and fifty dollars. He's a bad-tempered brute, and blind into the bargain. But I'm not bound to tell Mr. Richmond that, and so spoil

my trade. I've put a flea in his ear about Nichols, and I guess he will be back again."

The prospect of making a good bargain caused Abner to be unusually pleasant and good-humored, so much so that Mrs. Bickford regarded him with surprise.

"What's come over the man?" thought the housekeeper. "It's too good to last."

She was quite correct there. Mr. Holden was naturally crabbed, and fair weather with him was the exception rather than the rule. On the present occasion it did not last many hours.

Abner Holden went to the store and did not return till twelve o'clock, the usual dinner hour.

Meanwhile, Mr. Richmond, his caller of the morning, had been to see Sam Nichols and inspected his horse but came away without effecting a purchase.

"I don't think I can do better," he reflected, "than to take that horse of Holden's. Let me see, it is only half-past ten. I shall have time to go up there this morning. I might as well settle matters at once."

Accordingly, eleven o'clock found him again in Abner Holden's yard.

Herbert was out in the yard engaged in splitting wood.

"Is Mr. Holden at home?" inquired the stranger.

"No, sir."

"Will he be at home soon?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. He only went out to the store."

"Then I think I will wait. I was here once before this morning. I was talking with him about buying one of his horses. If you can spare the time, I would like to have you go with me to the pasture, and I will take another look at the one I saw this morning."

"Certainly, sir," said Herbert.

They reached the bars dividing the pasture from the next field. Spitfire was cropping the grass just on the other side.

"There," said the stranger, pointing him out, "that is the horse I was looking at."

"*That one!*" repeated Herbert, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, he is a fine-looking animal."

"Ye-es," said Herbert, hesitatingly.

"However, I don't so much care about that, as for his being gentle. I want him for a family horse, such as my wife may drive, without fear, while I am away."

"Did Mr. Holden tell you he was gentle?"

"Yes. He recommended him highly for that and told me he had no serious defect."

"Are you sure this is the horse?" asked Herbert.

"Certainly. I am not likely to be mistaken in it. I suppose it is all he says?"

Herbert was placed in a perplexing position. He knew that if he told the truth he should incur Abner Holden's anger but his conscience revolted at suffering the stranger to be taken in and thus, perhaps, exposing his wife to serious danger.

"I am afraid I cannot confirm what Mr. Holden says," he answered, reluctantly. "The horse is very ill-tempered, and is blind of one eye."

"Is it possible? Then I have had a narrow escape. You have done me a good service, my boy, in telling me the truth, for I am, myself, unused to horses, and should have taken the animal on your employer's recommendation. Accept this acknowledgment of my indebtedness."

He would have placed a five-dollar bill in Herbert's hand, but our hero firmly refused to receive it.

"I have only done my duty, sir. I cannot accept money for doing it. Thank you all the same."

"Perhaps you are right, my lad. If I ever have a chance to serve you, don't hesitate to let me know it."

"There'll be a storm if Mr. Holden hears of this," thought Herbert. "But I could not do otherwise."

CHAPTER X

THE CLOUDS GATHER

At twelve o'clock Abner Holden returned home, still in good humor. He did not anticipate another call from his expected customer until the afternoon.

"Perhaps he won't hear about it," thought Herbert.

Abner was so elated at the thought of his good bargain in prospect, that he could not keep it to himself.

"I've about sold Spitfire, Mrs. Bickford," he said.

"Sold Spitfire! Who wants to buy him?"

"A man that called here this morning. What do you think he wants him for?"

"To break his neck," suggested the housekeeper.

"He wants him for a good family horse for his wife to drive," and Abner Holden burst into a laugh.

"Perhaps he's anxious to become a widower."

"No, the fact is he thinks the horse is gentle."

"You told him so, I suppose?"

"Of course I did."

"Knowing it to be false."

"Shut up, Mrs. Bickford. You know all is fair in trade."

"No, I don't, Mr. Holden. To my mind a lie's just as much a lie in trade as in anything else. I suppose the man trusted to your recommendation."

"Suppose he did. I got cheated on the horse, and I've got to get rid of it, somehow. As it is, I shall make a handsome profit."

"Well, Mr. Holden, all I've got to say is, I am glad I haven't got as tough a conscience as you have."

"You don't know anything about business."

"Well, manage things your own way. I ain't responsible but I pity the poor man if he buys Spitfire."

"So do I," chuckled Abner. "That's where you and I agree, Mrs. Bickford."

Herbert listened in silence. He felt glad that he had been the means of saving Mr. Richmond from being overreached, though he knew very well that Mr. Holden's rage would be furious when he learned what had interfered with the trade.

"I'm expecting the man this afternoon, Mrs. Bickford," said Mr. Holden, "and shall stay around home to see him. When he comes, call me at once; and, mind, not a word about Spitfire."

"Just as you say. I wash my hands of the affair."

"Washing your hands won't do you any harm," said Abner, with a laugh, at what he supposed a witticism.

Mrs. Bickford took no notice of this remark. It was not quite easy to say why she remained in charge of Mr. Holden's household. However, he did not meddle with her, or, if he did, he got the worst of it, and it was perhaps the independence that she enjoyed which led her to remain in the house.

Abner Holden sat at the window, and looked up the road, awaiting anxiously the appearance of the customer.

"I hope he'll bring the money with him," he thought. "I'd like to have matters all arranged to-day, before he smells a rat. If I get the money once in my hands, he may scold all he pleases about the horse."

But the old clock in the corner kept ticking—minute after minute passed—and still the stranger did not appear.

"He can't have struck a bargain with Sam Nichols," muttered Abner, apprehensively. "If he has, it'll be sort of a swindle on me. Maybe Nichols has been telling him lies about me."

Abner waxed so angry over this supposition, that, although it was merely conjecture, he already began to consider in what way he could "come up with Sam Nichols."

"That money would come very handy," thought Abner. "There's a horse worth two of Spitfire, I can get for a hundred and fifty, and that would leave me a hundred. I wish he would come."

Abner began to fear that he had lost his bargain.

"I guess I'll put on my hat and go round to the tavern," he said to Mrs. Bickford. "If the gentleman I spoke of should call while I am away, just send the boy round after me as quick as possible."

"Very well."

Abner Holden walked hurriedly to the tavern, determined to bring about a bargain, which would be so desirable for him, if it were a possible thing. He must and would get rid of Spitfire, however many falsehoods he might have to tell. What was truth in comparison to two hundred and fifty dollars! Suppose Spitfire *should* run away with the stranger's wife and break her limbs, it was everybody's duty to look out for himself in this world.

In a few minutes Abner stood on the piazza of the tavern, a little out of breath with rapid walking.

"Is Mr. Richmond still here?" he inquired of the landlord, anxiously.

"Yes, but he means to leave in five minutes."

"Where is he?"

"In his room."

"I want to see him on particular business—I wish you would send up and ask him to come down."

"Very well."

"William," said the landlord to his son, "go tell Mr. Richmond that Mr. Holden wishes to see him."

"You don't know of his having bought a horse of Sam Nichols, do you?" asked Abner of the landlord.

"No, I am sure he has not."

Abner felt somewhat relieved by this. As long as he was still unprovided with a horse, there was still a chance.

Mr. Richmond followed William downstairs.

"You wished to see me?" he asked, glancing toward Mr. Holden.

"Yes, about the horse you were looking at."

"I have concluded not to take him," said the other.

"You didn't buy of Sam Nichols, did you?"

"No, his horse did not suit me."

"You haven't any other in your eye, have you?"

"No."

"Then hadn't you better look at mine again?"

"It would be of no use."

"If the price is any objection," said Abner, insinuatingly, "I don't know but I might say a *leetle* less, though the animal's wuth more'n I ask for it."

"It isn't the price that stands in the way, Mr. Holden."

"What is it then? Sam Nichols hain't been slandering me, I hope. If he has, I'll be even with him."

"Spare your anger against Nichols. He said nothing against you; though I believe you warned me against him."

"Yes, I did. I felt it my duty to caution you, so you might not be overreached by him."

"You preferred to overreach me yourself."

Abner started, and changed color.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Who told you I wanted to overreach you?"

"Why, this is the way the matter stands. I asked you for a good family horse, such as my wife might drive with safety. Didn't you understand me so?"

"Of course."

"And you tried to sell me an ill-tempered brute, blind of one eye, for an extortionate price. Can you deny it?"

"Somebody's been telling you a pack of lies."

"I don't think they are lies. I have every reason to think they are true. By the way, what is the animal's name?"

"Spitfire," said Abner, rather reluctantly.

"A good name for a family horse," said the stranger, sarcastically.

"Where did you learn all this?" demanded Abner. "Who's been slandering the horse?"

"I got my information at your place, from one who ought to know."

A light dawned upon Abner Holden's mind.

"Herbert told him," muttered Abner. "That cursed boy has spoiled my bargain, and he shall smart for it."

In a furious rage he retraced his steps homeward, breathing threats of vengeance dire against our hero.

CHAPTER XI

A CRISIS

ABNER HOLDEN'S disappointment was excessive at the sudden falling through of his horse trade, and his feeling of anger against Herbert for his agency in the matter was in proportion to his disappointment.

"I'll give him a good flogging," muttered Abner. "I'll teach him to spoil my bargains. I reckon he won't do it a second time."

It was in this frame of mind that he reached home.

Herbert had just entered the kitchen with an armful of wood when he confronted his employer.

"He's found out," Herbert concluded at once, and he braced his nerves for the storm which he knew must come.

"Well, young man, I've an account to settle with you," said Abner, abruptly.

Herbert did not reply.

"Why don't you speak?" said Abner. "What do you mean by looking me impudently in the face?"

"I have no intention of being impudent," said Herbert. "I think you are mistaken, Mr. Holden."

"Do you dare to tell me I am mistaken?" roared Holden, lashing himself into a rage.

"I don't mean to do or say anything that is not perfectly respectful," said Herbert, manfully, looking steadily in his employer's face.

"Why did you tell a pack of lies about my horse this morning, and so make me lose my trade?"

"I didn't tell a pack of lies," said Herbert.

"Didn't you tell the man who came here that he was an ill-tempered brute and blind of one eye?"

"I told him that Spitfire was not suitable for a family horse."

"What did you tell him that for?"

"Because it was true."

"Supposing it was true, didn't you know that you were spoiling my trade?"

"I am sorry for that, Mr. Holden, but if he had bought the horse it might have broken his wife's neck."

"What business was that of yours? That was his lookout."

"I didn't look upon it in that way. I thought he ought to buy the horse with his eyes open."

"You did, did you?" roared Abner. "Then I advise you to open your own eyes, for you're going to get one of the worst lickings you ever had."

Abner Holden's anger had now reached an ungovernable pitch. Looking about him for a weapon, he espied the broom resting against the wall. He seized it, and with a scream of rage made for Herbert, shaking off the grasp of the housekeeper, who tried to stay him.

Herbert ran round the table. Abner pursued him with headlong haste.

"Lord preserve us! The man is mad!" ejaculated the housekeeper, trying to get out of the way. The kitchen was small, and before she could guard against a collision, Abner had stumbled over Mrs. Bickford, and both came

down together. She uttered a succession of piercing shrieks, and, with a view of relieving Herbert, pretended that her life was in danger, grasping Abner by the hair and holding him fast.

Herbert saw that this was the favorable moment for escape, and, seizing his hat, dashed out of the house.

He ran across the fields as fast as his limbs could carry him, expecting that he would be pursued.

"Let go my hair, Mrs. Bickford!" exclaimed Abner.

"I dare not," she said. "I'm afraid you'll murder me."

"You are making a fool of yourself. What should I murder you for? But I will, if you don't let go."

"Hello, who's talking of murder?" demanded a rough voice.

The speaker was a neighbor who chanced to be passing, and was led to enter by the uproar.

"Save me!" exclaimed Mrs. Bickford. "He's threatened to murder me."

"Stop your nonsense, you old fool!" retorted Abner, vexed at the equivocal position in which he was placed.

"Holden, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for attacking a defenseless woman."

"I didn't intend to. She got in my way and I stumbled over her; and then she seized me by the hair."

"What were you going to do with that broom?"

"What was I going to do? I was going to thrash that rascally boy of mine and Mrs. Bickford knew it well."

"What has he done?"

"He? He's spoiled a trade by his lying and I was going to flog him when Mrs. Bickford got in my way."

"Well," said the visitor, shrugging his shoulders, "I don't want to interfere in your affairs. I suppose that you've a right to flog the boy, but it strikes me that a broom handle is rather an ugly weapon."

"It isn't half heavy enough," said Abner, savagely; "but where is the boy? Did you see him?"

"Given leg-bail, I reckon, and I don't wonder at it."

"Run away!" ejaculated Abner, disappointed. "Did you see where he went?"

"No, I didn't, and if I had, I'm not sure that I would tell you."

"He'll get it when he does come back," said Abner to himself.

We must now return to Herbert, whom we left running across the fields.

His departure had been so sudden, that his one idea was to get out of the way of his employer's violence. He was at first under the impression that he was pursued, but when, after running perhaps a quarter of a mile, he ventured to look around, he saw, to his great relief, that there was no one on his track. Being out of breath, he stopped, and, throwing himself down on the grass in the shadow of a stone wall, began to consider his plans.

Everything was in doubt except one point. He felt that he had broken, finally, the tie that bound him to Mr. Holden. He would not return to him. He had experienced enough of Abner's ugly and unreasonable temper to feel that there could be no harmony between them, and as to submitting to personal violence from such a man as that, his blood boiled at the thought. He knew that he should resist with all the strength he possessed, and what the result might be he did not dare to think.

But where should he go? That was a question not easily answered. After his experience of his uncle's indifference to him, he did not wish to appeal to him for aid, yet he felt that he should like to go to New York and try his fortune there. It was a thousand miles off, and he might be some time in getting there. He might have to stop and work on the way. But, sooner or later, he resolved that he would find his way to the great metropolis.

But there was one difficulty which presented itself at the outset. He had on a pair of overalls and a ragged vest

which Abner had provided for him, intending that he should save the good suit he brought with him for Sundays. He must get his other suit.

But this was in Mr. Holden's attic, and it would hardly be prudent to venture back for it, as Abner was on the lookout for him, and there would be a collision, and perhaps he might be forcibly detained. Fortunately, his money he had about him. This amounted to nearly fifteen dollars, and would be of essential service to him. As to the clothes, he must think of a way of securing them, before setting out on his journey to New York.

CHAPTER XII

RALPH THE RANGER

ONE thing was certain. There was no chance of obtaining the clothes at present. Probably his best course would be to wait till night, and then come back to the house on the chance of gaining Mrs. Bickford's attention.

As soon as his breath was recovered, Herbert got up and headed for the woods. A few minutes found him in the midst of them. He made his way with some difficulty through the underbrush, parting the thick stems with his hands, until he reached a comparatively open space of perhaps an acre in extent. In the midst of this space a rude hut was visible, constructed of logs, and covered with the branches of trees. In front of it, sitting on the stump of a tree, which perhaps had been spared for that purpose, sat a tall man, with very brown complexion, clad in a rough hunting suit. His form, though spare, was tough and sinewy, and the muscles of his bare arms seemed like whipcords. A short, black pipe was in his mouth. The only covering of his head was the rough, grizzled hair,

which looked as if for months it had never felt the touch of a comb or brush.

Herbert recognized him as Ralph the Ranger. For years he had lived a hermitlike existence in the forest, supporting himself mainly by his rifle. What cause led him to shun the habitations of his kind and make his dwelling in the woods, no one knew and perhaps no one ever would know, for of himself he was silent.

He looked up as he heard Herbert's step, and said, abruptly: "Well, boy, what do you want?"

His manner was rough, but our hero was not afraid. He answered frankly, "I am hiding."

"Hiding? Who from?"

"From Abner Holden."

"Humph! Why should you hide from him?"

"I am bound to him, and he is angry with me because he thinks I interfered in a trade of his. He wanted to beat me, so I ran away."

"Good!" said Ralph, approvingly. "Tell me about it."

Herbert drew near, and told his story.

Ralph listened attentively.

"Boy," said he, "I think you are honest. There are not many that can be said of. As for Abner Holden, I know him. He's a mean skinflint. Pah!" and he spit, contemptuously. "You'd better not go back to him."

"I don't mean to," said Herbert, promptly.

"What are your plans? Have you formed any?"

"I want to go to New York."

"To New York," repeated Ralph, thoughtfully. "You wish to get into the crowd, while I seek to avoid it. But it is natural to youth. At your age it was so with me. I hope, my boy, the time will not come when you, like me, will wish to shun the sight of men."

Herbert listened with surprise to the speech of this man, which was quite superior to what might have been expected from one of his appearance.

"When do you wish to start?" asked Ralph.

"First, I want to get my clothes."

"Where are they?"

"In my room, at Mr. Holden's house."

"How do you expect to get them?"

"Mrs. Bickford is a friend of mine. I thought I might go there to-night and attract her attention without rousing Mr. Holden. She would get them for me."

"Good! I will go with you."

"Will you?" asked Herbert, gladly.

He had felt a little doubt as to the result of his expedition, but with so able an auxiliary as Ralph, he knew he could bid easy defiance to Abner.

"Yes, I will stand by you, and you shall share my cabin as long as you like. You are not afraid of me?"

"No," said Herbert, quickly.

Ralph looked kindly at him.

"Some of the children run from me," he said. "It is not strange, perhaps, for I look savage. I suppose, but you do well to trust me. I will be your friend, and that is something I have not said to any living being for years. I like your face. It is brave and true."

"Thank you for your favorable opinion, Mr. ——" Here Herbert paused in uncertainty, for he had never heard Ralph's surname.

"Call me Ralph. I have done with the title of civilization. Call me Ralph. That will suit me best."

"Thank you for your kindness, then, Ralph."

"What is your name?"

"Herbert—Herbert Mason."

"Then, Herbert, I think you must be hungry. Have you eaten your dinner?"

"No," said Herbert.

"Then you shall share mine. My food is of the plainest, but such as it is, you are welcome. Come in."

Herbert entered the cabin. The only table was a plank

supported at each end by a barrel. From a box Ralph drew out some corn bread and cold meat. He took a tin measure and filled it with water from a brook near by.

"All is ready," he said. "Take and eat, if my food is not too rude."

Herbert did eat, and with appetite. He was a growing boy, whose appetite seldom failed him, and he had been working hard since breakfast, which he had taken at six.

Ralph looked on with approval.

"You are the first that has shared my meal for many a long day," he said. "Day after day, and year after year, I have broken my fast alone, but it seems pleasant, after all," he said, musingly. "Men are treacherous and deceitful, but you," he said, resting his glance on the frank, ingenuous face of his youthful guest, "you must be honest and true, or I am greatly deceived."

"I hope you will find me so," said Herbert.

After despatching the meal, Herbert sat down on the grass just outside the cabin.

"How long have you lived here, Ralph?" asked our hero at length.

"Ten years," said the recluse, removing his pipe from his lips.

"It is a long time."

"Yes, boy, a long time in the life of one as young as you, but to me it seems but yesterday that I built this cabin and established myself here."

"Are you not often lonely?"

"Lonely? Yes, but not more so than I should be in the haunts of men. I have company, too. There are the squirrels that leap from bough to bough of the tall trees. Then there are the birds that wake me with their singing. They are company for me. They are better company than men. They, at least, will not deceive me."

He paused, and bent his eyes upon the ground. He was

thinking, not of the boy beside him, but of the past, and the recollection apparently was not pleasant.

The afternoon wore away. When eight o'clock came, the Ranger said: "You had better rest, my boy; I will wake you up at twelve and we will see if we can get your clothes."

To this proposal Herbert assented, as he felt tired.

He slept, he knew not how long, when he was gently shaken by Ralph.

"Where am I?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

The sight of the Ranger bending over him soon brought back the recollection of his position, and he sprang up promptly. Ralph showed him an easier way out of the woods than that by which he had entered.

In half an hour they were standing beside Abner Holden's house. It was perfectly dark, the inmates probably being fast asleep.

"I know where the housekeeper sleeps," said Herbert. "I'll throw up a pebble at her window."

He did as proposed. Mrs. Bickford, who was a light sleeper, heard and went to the window.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"It's I, Mrs. Bickford," said Herbert.

"What, Herbert? Shall I let you in?"

"No; I don't want to come in. All I want is my clothes. They are up in my trunk."

"I'll go and get them for you."

She went upstairs and quickly returned with the clothes, which she let down from the window.

"Are you hungry, Herbert?" she asked. "Let me bring you something to eat."

"No, thank you, Mrs. Bickford; I am with Ralph the Ranger. He has kindly given me all the food I want."

"What are you going to do? Are you going to stop with him?"

"No, I am going East in a day or two. I am going to New York. I will write to you from there."

"I am sorry to have you go, Herbert. But I think I hear Mr. Holden stirring. Good-by and may God be with you!"

Herbert withdrew swiftly. Ralph joined him and both together went back to the woods.

CHAPTER XIII

A MOMENT OF PERIL

ABNER HOLDEN did not suspect that Herbert actually intended to leave him permanently; but when evening came and he did not return, he became apprehensive that such was the case. Now, for more than one reason, he objected to our hero's leaving. First, because he was a strong, capable boy and his services were worth considerable, and, secondly, because he disliked Herbert and it was a satisfaction to tyrannize over him. He was a bully and a tyrant by nature, and decidedly objected to losing one so completely in his power as Herbert was.

When night came and Herbert did not return, he decided to search for him and bring him back, if found, the very next day. He did not impart his purpose to Mrs. Bickford, for he was at no loss to discover that the sympathies of the kind-hearted housekeeper were not with him but with the boy whom he wished to abuse. When breakfast was over, therefore, he merely said: "Mrs. Bickford, I am going out for a short time. If Herbert should return while I am absent, you may tell him to finish hoeing those potatoes in the garden."

"Do you think he will come back, Mr. Holden?"

"Yes, he will soon be tired of wandering about."

Mrs. Bickford did not reply; but she did not feel quite so much confidence as her employer appeared to do in the excellence of the home which Herbert had enjoyed under Abner Holden's roof.

"It's just as well he shouldn't suspect Herbert's plan," she thought.

Abner was not long in deciding that Herbert was hidden in the woods. That, indeed, seemed the most natural place of refuge for one placed in his circumstances.

We must now return to Herbert.

"If you will wait till nightfall," said Ralph, "you will be more safe from pursuit and I will accompany you for a few miles."

Ralph went off on a hunting expedition but Herbert remained behind, fearing that he might tear or stain his clothes, of which it was necessary, now, to be careful. How to pass the time was the question. There were no books visible, for Ralph seemed to have discarded everything that would remind him of civilization.

Herbert watched the squirrels flitting from branch to branch of the tall trees. After a while his attention was drawn to a bird, which flew with something in its beak nearly to the top of a tall tree not far off.

"I shouldn't wonder," thought Herbert, interested, "if she's got a nest, and some young ones up there. I have a great mind to climb up and see."

He measured the tree with his eye. It was very tall, exceeding in its height most of its forest neighbors.

"I don't know as I can climb it," he said to himself a little doubtfully; "but anyway I am going to try. There's nothing like trying."

This was a lucky determination for Herbert, as will speedily appear.

It was twenty feet to the first branching off, and this was of course the most difficult part of the ascent, since it was necessary to "skin up," and the body of the tree

was rather too large to clasp comfortably. So he pushed on his way and though once or twice in danger of falling, he succeeded in reaching the first bough.

In a short time our hero was elated to find himself probably fifty feet from the ground, so high it made him feel a little dizzy to look down. He reached the nest, and found the young birds—three in number. The parent bird hovered near by, evidently quite alarmed for the safety of her brood. But Herbert had no intention of harming them. He only climbed up to gratify his curiosity, and because he had nothing more important to do. Though he did not know it, his own danger was greater than that which threatened the birds. For, just at that moment, Mr. Holden, in his wanderings, had reached Ralph's cabin and Herbert, looking down, beheld, with some anxiety, the figure of the unwelcome visitor. He saw Abner enter the cabin, and, after a few moments' interval, issue from it with an air of disappointment.

"How lucky," thought our hero, "that he did not find me inside!"

Abner Holden looked about him in every direction but the right one. He little dreamed that the object of his pursuit was looking down upon him, securely, from above.

"I don't think he'll find me," thought Herbert. "Wouldn't he give something to know where I am?"

But our young hero was doomed to disappointment. Just at that moment he was seized with a strong inclination to sneeze.

Alarmed lest the sound should betray him, he made desperate efforts to suppress it.

"Ker-chew!" sneezed Herbert, violently.

As he anticipated, Abner's attention was attracted by the loud noise, which he rightly concluded could hardly proceed from a bird or a squirrel. He had just been on the point of leaving the cabin for some other part of the woods, but at this sound he stood still. Looking up to

discover whence it proceeded, his keen eyes detected Herbert in his lofty perch. His eyes sparkled with joy.

"Ha, you young rascal!" he exclaimed. "So you are there? You were going to run away, were you?"

Now that Herbert was actually discovered, his fear left him, and he became self-possessed and confident.

"Yes, Mr. Holden; such is my intention."

"Boldly spoken," said Abner, provoked by our hero's coolness, for he had hoped to find him terrified and pleading for forgiveness. "I admire your frankness and will try to equal it. I suppose you'll give it up as a bad job."

"No, sir," said Herbert, firmly.

"Take care, sir," said Abner, in anger. "Take care how you defy me. Come down here at once."

"What for?" inquired Herbert, without stirring.

"What for?" repeated Abner Holden. "That I may flog you within an inch of your life."

"That's no inducement," said our hero, coolly.

"Do you refuse to obey me?" shouted Abner.

"I refuse to be flogged. You don't get me down for any such purpose, Mr. Holden."

"Then, by Heaven, if you won't come otherwise, I'll come up and help you down."

The angry man at once commenced the ascent. Anger gave him strength and he climbed halfway to the first branching off, somewhat to Herbert's uneasiness.

But Abner's success was only temporary. At the height of a dozen feet he began to slip and, despite his frantic struggles, he slid to the ground, tearing his coat and blistering his hands.

What was to be done?

In his anger and excitement, he drew a pistol from his breast pocket and pointed upward, saying, menacingly, "Come down, you young rascal, or I will fire!"

Herbert was startled.

"Will you come down?" repeated Abner, fiercely. "Quick, or I fire."

Herbert's cheek was pale but in a resolute voice he answered, "I will not."

Abner Holden laid his finger upon the trigger and would have carried his threat into execution; but at the critical moment the pistol was wrenched from his hand.

Turning he met the stern glance of Ralph the Ranger.

CHAPTER XIV

TAKEN PRISONER

"What does all this mean?" demanded Ralph.

"What right have you to interfere?" said Abner.

"The right that any man has to prevent murder."

"I wasn't going to murder him."

"What were you going to do?" asked Ralph. "Why were you pointing the pistol at him?"

"I wanted to frighten him."

"You meant to have him think you were going to fire. I believe you were."

"Why didn't he come down when I bade him?"

"I'll answer that question," said Herbert, from the tree. "Mr. Holden promised to beat me if I would come down, but I didn't think that a sufficient inducement."

"I have a right to beat you," said Abner, doggedly. "Ain't you bound to me; tell me that?"

"I was," said Herbert, "and if you had treated me well, I would have stayed with you; but I don't mean to remain to be abused."

"You hear the lad's answer," said Ralph. "I like his spirit, and I'll stand by him. He won't return with you."

While this conversation was going on, Abner had been

slowly edging himself toward the spot upon which Ralph had thrown the pistol. He suddenly darted forward, seized the weapon and, facing about, said, with malicious triumph, "Now you're in my power, both of you. We'll see whether he'll go back with me or not."

As he spoke he pointed the pistol toward Ralph.

The latter laughed contemptuously.

This irritated Abner Holden.

"I will count ten," he said. "Unless the boy begins to come down before I stop, I fire at you. One—two——"

"Hold!" said Ralph, and drawing his revolver, he pointed it at Abner. "Two can play at that game, Abner Holden. This revolver is fully loaded. It gives me six chances of hitting you. You have but one chance with your pistol. The moment your finger touches the trigger, your doom is sealed. I never miss my aim."

A sickly hue overspread the face of Abner Holden.

"Put down your revolver," he said, in a very different tone. "I wasn't in earnest, you know."

"I know nothing of the kind," retorted Ralph.

"Put down your weapon," said Abner, nervously. "It might go off."

"Yes, it might," returned Ralph. "I will lower it, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you lay down your pistol on the ground."

Abner demurred but finally did as he was commanded.

"That is well," said Ralph. He walked toward the pistol, lifted it, and fired it off among the trees.

"So much for that," he said. "Now, Herbert, you may come down."

Herbert complied promptly. He felt the utmost confidence in his new friend and did not fear to descend, though his bitterest enemy awaited him beneath.

Meanwhile an idea struck Abner Holden. He saw that he was no match for Herbert as long as Ralph chose to

befriend him. He resolved to enlist the latter on his side.

“Hark you, Ralph,” he said, “come aside with me.”

Ralph followed him a few paces in silence.

“Now what is it you have to say to me?” he demanded.

“About this boy,” said Abner. “He is bound to me.”

“Well?”

“And the law gives me authority over him.”

“Well?”

“I want him to go back with me.”

“Well?”

“Will you promise not to interfere between us?”

“I can’t promise that,” said Ralph, briefly.

“Stay a moment,” said Abner, seeing that he was on the point of leaving him. “of course I am willing to make it worth your while. I’ll give you—well, three dollars, to help me secure him and carry him back to my house.”

“What do you take me for?” asked Ralph.

“For a poor man,” said Abner. “Think a moment. Three dollars will buy you provisions for a week. They couldn’t be more easily earned. Only promise not to interfere between the boy and myself.”

Ralph turned upon him scornfully.

“I have promised the boy my protection; and you would have me forfeit my word for a paltry three dollars?”

“I’ll give you five,” said Abner.

“Not for five dollars nor five thousand,” returned Ralph, shortly. “I thought you meant to insult me, but I see you only judge me by yourself. The boy shall not return with you. Make up your mind to that.”

“I can have you arrested,” said Abner, angrily.

Ralph laughed.

“Let that comfort you for the loss of the boy,” he said.

“I’ll have the boy, too,” muttered Abner, turning to leave them.

“Where are you going?” demanded Ralph.

"I am going home."

"Not yet."

"Why not?" demanded Abner, facing about.

"Because I can't spare you yet."

"What right have you to interfere with my movements?" said Abner.

"None, perhaps; but I will inquire into that afterwards. It is enough that, for the present, you must stay here."

"I shall do no such thing," said Abner, and he again turned to go.

Ralph deliberately lifted his weapon and took aim.

"What do you say now?" he asked.

"Surely you will not fire at me," said Abner.

"Not if you remain where you are."

"How long do you mean to keep me?"

"As long as may be necessary. That is all. Herbert, go into the cabin and look in one corner for a cord."

Herbert soon returned with a stout cord.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked Abner.

"I am going to bind you," said Ralph, coolly.

"I'll have the law on you for this," said Abner, hoarsely.

"All in good time," said Ralph. "But what has the law to say about attempted murder?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that you attempted to murder this boy, and would have done so probably if I had not interfered."

Abner was silent. He felt that Ralph's testimony would have an ugly look.

"Let me go," he said, after a pause. "You needn't be afraid of my troubling either of you. Don't tie me."

"Abner Holden," said Ralph, "I know you, and I know you are not to be trusted. I have resolved to help this boy to escape from you, and I mean to do it effectually."

He had already tied the hands of Abner Holden, who, as he looked into the fearless, resolute face of the Ranger, felt that it would not do to resist. It chafed him most to

think that Herbert, his bound boy, should be a witness of his humiliation, and he scowled savagely at our hero. But Herbert showed no triumph.

Ralph quickly tied both hands and feet, and then took the helpless body of Abner into the cabin, where he placed him in one corner.

"Are you thirsty?" he asked.

"Yes," said Abner, sullenly.

Ralph placed a cup of water to his lips. He put a loaf of bread beside him, which, though his wrists were tied, he could reach and then beckoned to Herbert.

"Come," he said, "it is time that we were going."

Abner gnashed his teeth with anger, as he watched them issue from the cabin together, and felt how utterly helpless he was to prevent them.

CHAPTER XV

A FOUR-FOOTED FOE

ABNER HOLDEN'S reflections, alone in Ralph's cabin, bound hand and foot, were not of the most agreeable nature. It was humiliating to find himself baffled by the boy who had been bound to him.

That Herbert would escape from him beyond the chance of recovery seemed now almost certain. If he were free, something might be done. But he was so securely bound that it was impossible to get free without help.

Three hours passed, and still no prospect of release. The bonds chafed his wrist. He tried to loosen the cords but without success.

"Must I stay here all night?" he thought, in alarm.

But deliverance was at hand, though its first approach was disagreeable.

A large dog entered the cabin. When he saw Abner he appeared to take a dislike to him and barked.

"Go away, you brute!" said Abner, wrathfully.

The dog, however, appeared instinctively to understand that Abner Holden was able only to threaten him and barked more furiously than before, showing a formidable row of teeth, which Abner feared every moment he might fasten upon his arm or leg.

Abner Holden was not a man of courage. Though his disposition was that of a bully, he was easily frightened, and the fierce look of the dog alarmed him not a little.

"Go away!" he shrieked, shrinking back as far as he could from the open mouth of his persecutor.

A hoarse bark was the only reply, and the dog made an artful spring, which was only a feint, but had too much the appearance of earnest to suit his enemy.

"Oh, will nobody save me from the brute?" groaned Abner, in an ecstasy of terror. "If I could only get my hands loose!" and he tugged frantically at the cord.

Feeling how utterly he was at a disadvantage, he condescended to coax his fierce antagonist.

"Be quiet, that's a good dog," he said, with hypocritical softness. "Good dog!" repeated Abner, in wheedling tones. "There's some dinner," and he pushed over the provisions which Ralph had left.

While the dog was apparently taking his offer into consideration, a boy's voice was heard outside, calling "Carlo, Carlo!"

The dog pricked up his ears and ran out of the cabin.

"So you are here, you truant," said the boy. "Why did you run away? What have you to say for yourself, sir?"

The dog answered by a wag of his tail.

"Oh, yes, you may wag your tail, but I've a great mind to punish you for running away, and putting me to the trouble of finding you."

"Hello!" cried Abner, in a loud voice.

"Who's that?" thought the boy, surprised.

As the voice evidently came from within the cabin, he ventured to the door, and looked in. He was considerably surprised to see Abner Holden, whom he knew well by sight, lying bound hand and foot in the corner.

"Is that you, Mr. Holden?" he asked in surprise.

"Of course it is," said Abner.

"Are you tied?"

"Don't you see I am?" snarled Abner.

"Who tied you?"

"That rascal, Ralph. I mean to have him hung, if I live."

"Ralph! Why, I thought he was quiet and peaceable."

"He tried to murder me but tied me, as you see."

"I can't understand it."

"There is no need of understanding it. Come and unfasten these cords. I feel stiff and cramped."

The boy tried to unfasten the cord but it was too securely tied.

"Where is your knife?"

"I haven't got any."

"Then take the ax."

This the boy got and severed the string.

Abner stretched himself to relieve his cramped limbs.

"Is that your dog?" he asked, surveying his four-legged enemy with no friendly expression.

"Yes, that's Carlo. Come here, Carlo."

"He's been in here barking at me, and threatening to bite me, and now I'll have my revenge."

"What do you mean?" inquired the boy, in alarm, as Abner seized the ax and swung it over his head.

"I'm going to kill that brute."

"No, no, he's a good dog. He won't do any harm," said the boy, in alarm.

"I'll kill him," said Abner, fiercely.

The dog surveyed his enemy with suspicion. He seemed to understand that danger menaced him. He growled in a low, hoarse, ominous tone, which showed that he was on his guard.

His owner had retreated to the door, and now tried to call him away.

"Carlo, Carlo, come out here, sir."

But Carlo would not come. He had no intention of shrinking from the danger that threatened him, but was bent on defending himself, as became a brave and dauntless dog, whose courage was above suspicion.

If Abner had not been so exasperated, he might have been terrified but anger reinforced his courage and, moreover, he had a great deal of confidence that the ax would make him more than a match for the dog.

"I'll kill him!" he exclaimed and once more he swung the ax above his head and brought it down with tremendous force in the direction of the dog.

Alas for poor Carlo, if the ax had struck him! But he was wary. The boy uttered a cry of alarm at the peril of his favorite. Carlo sprang to one side just as the ax descended and it was buried in the earthen floor of the cabin so deeply that Abner could not recover it.

The advantage was thus transferred to the other side and the dog was not slow in perceiving it. He sprang upon his adversary and bore him to the floor, seizing his coat between his strong teeth. He tugged at this with a strength which no ordinary cloth could withstand.

"Take him off! take him off!" shrieked Abner in terror.

The boy sprang to the rescue.

"Come away, Carlo," he said, grasping him by the collar; "come away, that's a good dog."

But habitually obedient as Carlo was, his young master found it difficult to get him away. Finally he succeeded but not till Mr. Holden's coat was badly torn.

The latter was crestfallen and angry and not so grateful as he ought to have been to his young defender.

"I'll make your father pay for this coat, you young rascal!" he said.

"It isn't my fault, Mr. Holden," said the boy.

"Yes it is. It was your dog that tore my coat."

"Carlo wouldn't have torn it if you hadn't attacked him."

"He attacked me first."

"You had better go away, Mr. Holden, or he may go at you again."

A low growl from the dog whom he held by the collar reinforced this suggestion and Abner, uttering threats both against the dog and his master, strode out of the cabin and bent his steps homeward.

As he entered the kitchen, the housekeeper turned, and, noticing his torn coat, exclaimed, "Good gracious, Mr. Holden, what's happened to you? How came your coat so badly torn?"

"It was a dog," muttered Abner.

"What a pity!" she exclaimed. "Whose dog was it?"

"Alfred Martin's. I'll make Martin pay for the coat. He has no right to keep such a brute."

"Have you seen anything of Herbert?" asked the housekeeper.

"No," snapped Abner.

This was a falsehood, of course, but he felt rather ashamed to confess that he had seen Herbert and that the latter had got the better of him. Mrs. Bickford perceived that he was out of humor and did not press the question. She concluded that he was angry because his quest had been unsuccessful.

CHAPTER XVI

JUST TOO LATE!

LEAVING Abner Holden bound in his cabin, Ralph led Herbert by a short path out of the woods.

"Your best course," he said, "will be to take the cars for Columbus at Vernon. From Columbus you will go to Wheeling and from there, over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to Baltimore and thence to New York. But all this will cost money."

"I have money," said Herbert.

"How much?"

"About fifteen dollars."

"Is that all?"

"Is it not enough to carry me to New York?"

"Hardly. Besides, when you get there, how will you get along? Have you any relations in the city?"

"Yes, an uncle."

"Then you will go to him?"

"No," said Herbert, hastily.

"Why not?"

"He does not care to see me. Shall I tell you what sort of a letter he wrote to Dr. Kent about me?"

"Yes, tell me."

Herbert, in indignant language, gave the substance of the letter.

"I shall not feel easy," he said, "until I return the ten dollars which my uncle sent me. I am not willing to remain under obligations to one who cares so little for me."

"I think you are proud," said Ralph.

"Perhaps I am; but is it not a proper pride?"

"I cannot say no," answered Ralph; "but would you feel the same about incurring obligations to a friend?"

"No," said Herbert; "that would be different."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I am going to ask you to accept help from me."

To Herbert's surprise, Ralph drew out a small bag, originally intended for shot, and drew therefrom five gold coins of five dollars each.

"Take them," he said, simply.

Herbert hesitated, while his face indicated surprise.

"I thought"—he commenced, and then paused.

"You thought me poor," said Ralph. "Is it not so?"

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Most people think so," said Ralph. "But it was not poverty that drove me from the busy world to this solitude. Rich or poor, I had money enough for my wants. You need have no hesitation in taking this. But on second thoughts, I had better give you more."

"No, no," said Herbert. "It is quite sufficient. You are very, very kind. Some time I hope to repay you."

"No," said Ralph. "Do not talk of repayment. Let me have the pleasure of giving you this small sum."

"How kind you are," said Herbert, impulsively.

"Yet my obligation to you is greater than yours to me."

"How can that be?" asked the boy.

"You are the first human being in whose society I have taken pleasure for years. Deeply injured by man, I conceived a hatred for the whole race. But in your frank face I see much to like. I think I could trust you."

"I hope so," said Herbert.

"You have inspired in me a new feeling, for which I cannot account. Yesterday the world had no attraction. To-day I feel an interest in your welfare, at least."

"Why do you bury yourself in this lonely place?" said Herbert. "You cannot be happy in it. Come with me to New York. It must be a beautiful place."

Ralph smiled gravely.

"To the young the world seems bright," he said. "It is after years have swept away one illusion after another,

and the hollowness of the world's friendship has been proved, that the brightness fades."

"You have seen more of life than I," said Herbert, "and perhaps it is presumption in me to question what you say; but I cannot help feeling that you are mistaken. I am sure that there is such a thing as true friendship."

"How many true friends are you blessed with?"

"Not many, perhaps. There is good Dr. Kent and his family. I am sure of their friendship. Then," he added, his color slightly rising, "I think I have found another friend," and he looked in the face of his guide.

The grave face softened.

"Thank you, my lad," said Ralph. "You are right there. You can rely upon my friendship being sincere."

"Then I am right, am I not?" said Herbert, smiling.

"I believe you are," said the guide, after a pause, "and I thank you for teaching me a lesson."

"Man was made in the image of God," said Herbert. "If we doubt man I think it is doubting God."

Ralph did not reply but walked on in silence.

"How far is it to Vernon?" asked Herbert, when they had emerged from the woods.

"It is five miles farther. Can you walk so far?"

"Oh, yes; I have good stout legs. But suppose Mr. Holden should escape. He might pursue us."

Ralph smiled.

"I think I shall find him when I return," he said.

"Are you not afraid he will have you arrested?"

"No, I care little. If I am fined, I will pay the fine."

"But you might be imprisoned?"

"If I see any danger of that, I shall be tempted to charge Abner Holden with his attempt upon your life. I have little fear of what the law may do as far as my agency in this affair is concerned."

Ralph seemed so entirely unconcerned that something

of his confidence was imparted to Herbert. He felt safe in his protection and his apprehensions of capture passed away. So with lightened heart he walked the five dusty miles to the village of Vernon.

It was a thrifty village with neat and tasteful dwellings lining the principal street. The railroad and manufacturing had built it up and given it an air of prosperity.

"We will go at once to the railway station," said Ralph. "You may catch the next train, and it will be as well to leave this neighborhood as soon as possible."

They were fortunate enough to reach the station fifteen minutes before the eastern train departed.

Herbert bought a ticket for Columbus, fifty miles distant, and entered the train.

"Good-by, Herbert," said Ralph, from the platform.

"Good-by," said Herbert. "Thank you for all your kindness to me. Shall I not see you again?"

"I do not know," said Ralph, musing. "I have no wish nor intention of going to New York at present, yet I have a feeling that we shall meet again."

"I hope it may be so," said Herbert.

While he spoke, the shrill sound of the railway whistle was heard, the train started, and Herbert was fairly off on his journey.

Just as he was leaving the depot, a wagon drove hastily up to the station, and Abner Holden jumped out.

"Stop! stop!" vociferated Abner. "Stop, I say!" as he caught sight of his bound boy on the way to freedom.

"You don't think they will stop the train for you, you fool!" said a man standing by. "You ought to have come sooner if you wanted to go by this train."

"I don't want to go by it," said Abner.

"What do you want, then?"

"My boy's run away and I have just seen him aboard the train."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Your son?"

"No. It's a young rascal that's bound to me."

"If he's a young rascal, I shouldn't think you'd **want** him back."

Turning away, his glance rested on Ralph.

"It's your doings," said he. "It's your fault and you shall pay for it if there's law in the land."

"What will the law say to your attempt to shoot the boy?" demanded Ralph, coolly.

Abner turned pale and realized that his best course was to keep quiet.

CHAPTER XVII

NEW ACQUAINTANCES

HERBERT stopped overnight at Columbus. The first train eastward left at seven o'clock in the morning. It was Herbert's intention to take this train but unfortunately, as he thought at the time, the clock at the hotel was ten minutes slow. Before he had reached the depot he saw the cars going out at the other end. He ran as fast as possible, but it was in vain.

"You're too late, youngster," said a porter. "You'll have to wait till the next train."

"When does the next train start?" asked our hero.

"At twelve o'clock."

"Then I shall have to wait till that time," Herbert concluded with regret.

Yet, as he directly afterwards thought, it could make no particular difference, since he had no engagement.

"I suppose," he reflected, "I might as well go back to the hotel."

He turned to leave the building when a carriage drew up to the station. It was drawn by two horses and driven

by a negro in livery. A lady put her head out of the window and inquired anxiously if the train had started, addressing Herbert, who happened to be nearest.

"Yes, madam," he answered, respectfully.

"I am so sorry," said the lady, in a tone of vexation and perplexity. "It was very important that my father should take that train."

"There is another train that starts at twelve."

"Yes," said the lady, "but you do not understand my difficulty. The few hours' difference in time would be of small importance but my father is blind. A gentleman of our acquaintance was going by this train and would have taken charge of him and seen him safe to his destination. By losing the train we lose his services."

"My dear," said an elderly gentleman, sitting on the opposite seat, "if I can get somebody to see me on board, I think I can manage very well."

"On no account, father," was the hasty reply.

"Where is the gentleman going?" asked Herbert.

"To Philadelphia."

"I am going on to New York," said our hero. "I expected to take the early train."

"Do you intend to go by the next train, then?"

"Yes, madam."

"Then perhaps—I have a great mind to ask you to take charge of my father."

"I shall be very glad to be of service to you," said Herbert. "There is only one objection," he added, with some embarrassment.

"What is that?"

"Why," said Herbert, frankly, "I was thinking of buying a second-class ticket."

"Oh," said the lady, promptly, "there need be no difficulty about that. If you will take the trouble to look after my father, we will gladly pay for your ticket."

"I am afraid my services will not be worth so much."

"You must leave that to us. If you do what you have undertaken, we shall consider the expense well incurred."

Herbert made no further objection. He felt it would be a lift to him.

"When did you say the train starts?" asked the lady.

"At twelve."

"Nearly five hours. That will be too long to wait. I think, father, we will go home."

"Yes, my dear, I think that will be best."

"Are you obliged to go home before starting?" the lady inquired, addressing Herbert.

"No, madam, I have no home in Columbus."

"Have you any plan for the next few hours?"

Herbert answered in the negative.

"Then will you not ride home with us? You will then be ready to start with my father."

"I shall be happy to do so."

"I think that will be much the best plan. Pompey, open the carriage door for the young gentleman."

Our hero was about to say that he could just as well open the door for himself but he reflected that it was best to adapt himself to the customs of those he was with. The lady signed to him to take a seat beside her.

"Home, Pompey," she said, briefly.

It was a new position for our hero, and he felt it to be so. His parents had never been rich and latterly had been very poor. Living in a small country village, he had never even seen so elegant a carriage as that in which he was now riding. He sank back upon the luxuriously cushioned seat and he could not help thinking how pleasant it would be if he could command so comfortable a conveyance whenever he wanted to ride out. But if he were blind, like the gentleman whom he was to take charge of, it would be a very poor compensation to ride in a luxurious carriage. After all, things were not so unequal as they seemed at first sight.

"Since you are to be my father's traveling companion," said the lady, "perhaps you will not object to telling us your name."

"Certainly," said our hero; "my name is Herbert Mason."

"Are you going from home for the first time?"

"I have no home," said Herbert. "My father and mother are both dead."

"Excuse me," said the lady, gently. "I am sorry to have touched upon a subject which must awaken sorrowful recollections. My father's name is Carroll. Father, you have heard that your young escort is Mr. Herbert Mason."

The old gentleman extended his hand, which Herbert took respectfully.

"I am afraid you will find me a troublesome charge," he said. "Since I have become blind I have been compelled to tax the kindness of others."

"The journey will be pleasanter to me," said Herbert, politely, "than if I were alone."

Mr. Carroll was evidently pleased with this remark, for he turned toward Herbert with increased interest.

"You can imagine how much more so it will be to me," he said. "I have not your resources for beguiling the tedium of the way. I would give all my possessions gladly for your young eyes. All journeys are alike to me now, since, however interesting the scenery, it is a blank to me."

"That is indeed a privation, sir."

"Especially in the journey we are about to take. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad affords views at once bold and beautiful. Have you ever traveled over the road?"

"No, sir."

"Then you will have all the pleasure of a first discovery. Before I became blind, before, indeed, the railway was located, I became, as a young man, familiar with this

whole section of country, so that I have, at least, the remembrance of it."

"You say you have never been over this railroad," said the lady. "Have you ever been to the East?"

"No, madam, I have always lived in Ohio."

"And you are now going to Philadelphia?"

"I am going to New York," said Herbert.

"Indeed! Is it on a visit?"

"No, madam, I am expecting to live there; that is, if I can make a living."

"Are you dependent, then, upon your own exertions for support?"

"Yes, madam."

"You seem very young for such a responsibility."

"I am fourteen."

"I thought you a year older. My Oscar is fourteen, and I am afraid he would make a poor hand at supporting himself. What do you think, father?"

"I think you are right, my dear. Oscar has not been placed in circumstances to develop his self-reliance."

"No; that probably has something to do with it. But, Herbert, if you will permit me to call you so, do you not look forward to the future with apprehension?"

"No, madam," said Herbert. "I am not afraid but that I shall be able to get along somehow. I think I shall find friends, and I am willing to work."

"That is the spirit that leads to success," said the old gentleman, approvingly. "Work comes to willing hands. I think you will succeed."

"I hope so, sir."

Our hero was gratified to meet with so much sympathy from those whose wealth placed them far above him in the social scale. But it was not surprising, for Herbert had a fine appearance and gentlemanly manners.

CHAPTER XVIII

A YOUNG ARISTOCRAT

AFTER a drive of three miles, the carriage entered, through an ornamental gate, upon a smooth driveway, which led up to a handsome mansion.

A boy, a little smaller than Herbert, ran out of the front door and opened the door of the carriage before Pompey had time to descend from the box.

"What, grandpa, come back?" he said, in surprise.

"Yes, Oscar, we were late for the train," said his mother. "I brought you a companion for a few hours. This is Herbert Mason, whom I entrust to your care."

Herbert offered his hand, saying, "I am glad to make your acquaintance, Oscar."

"How long are you going to stay?" asked Oscar.

"I must return in time to take the twelve o'clock train."

"Is grandpa going too?"

"Yes."

"And are you going to take care of him?"

"I believe so."

"I wouldn't want to."

"Why not?"

"Oh, it's an awful bore to be tied to a blind man."

"You'd find it more of a bore to be blind yourself."

"Yes, I suppose I should. Grandpa wants me to go to walk with him sometimes, but I don't like it."

"If I had a grandfather who was blind, I think I should be willing."

"Wait till you have one, and you'll see how it is then."

"I suppose he needs somebody."

"Oh, well, he can take one of the servants then. It's their business to work."

"Where do you live?" he asked, after a pause.

"I am going to live in New York."

"Are you? I should like to go there."

"Perhaps you wouldn't want to go as I am going."

"What, alone? Yes, I should rather go that way. Then I could do as I pleased. Now it's 'Oscar, do this,' and 'You mustn't do that,' all the time."

"That isn't what I mean exactly. I've got to earn my own living after I get there."

"You haven't run away from home, have you?"

"I haven't got any home."

"Where's your father and mother?"

"They are both dead."

"What are you going to do?"

"I hope to get into a store or countingroom."

"I shan't have to work for my living," said Oscar, in a tone of importance.

"Because your family is rich, I suppose," said Herbert.

"Yes, we've got a large estate, ever so many acres. That's what mother's got. Then grandpa is rich besides, and I expect he will leave me a good deal of his money. He's pretty old, and I don't believe he'll live very long."

Oscar said this with such satisfaction that Herbert was disgusted.

"You seem to be well off then," said he, at last.

"Yes," said Oscar, "our family is one of the first in the State. My father is a Peyton."

"Is he?" asked Herbert.

"We've got a plantation in Virginia. My father's there now. I hope we shall go there soon."

"Have you any brothers and sisters, Oscar?"

"I've got one sister. She's about twelve. But I say, I thought you were a gentleman's son when I saw you."

"So I am," said Herbert, emphatically.

"Was your father rich?"

"No."

"Did he have to work for a living?"

"Yes."

"Then he wasn't a gentleman," said Oscar, decidedly.

"Isn't anybody a gentleman that has to work for a living?" asked Herbert.

"Of course not," said Oscar, coolly. "It isn't respectable to work. Niggers and servants work."

"That is where I don't agree with you," said Herbert, his face flushing.

"You don't pretend to be a gentleman, do you?" demanded Oscar, insolently.

"Yes, I do," said Herbert, firmly.

"But you're not one, you know."

"I don't know anything of the kind," said Herbert, angrily. "I suppose you call yourself one."

"Of course, I am a gentleman," said Oscar, complacently.

"You don't talk like one, at any rate," retorted Herbert.

This was new language for Oscar to hear. The idea of being told by a boy who had to work for a living that he did not talk like a gentleman did not suit him at all. His black eyes flashed and he clenched his fists.

"Do you mean to insult me?" he demanded.

"I never insult anybody," said Herbert. "It is you that have insulted me."

"Didn't you tell me I was not a gentleman?" said Oscar.

"I said you did not talk like one."

"That's about the same thing," said Oscar.

"Just as you like. Even if I did say so, you said the same of me."

"Well, I suppose I did."

"I am as much a gentleman as you, to say the least."

"If you say that again, I'll knock you down," said Oscar, furiously.

"I'll say it all day, if I like," said Herbert, defiantly.

Perhaps it would have been better for Herbert to stop disputing and to have taken no notice of Oscar's words.

But Herbert was not perfect. Though manly and generous, he was quick to resent an insult, and accordingly, when Oscar dared to repeat what he had said, he instantly accepted the challenge.

Had Oscar been prudent he would have hesitated before endeavoring to carry his threat into execution. A moment's glance at the two boys would have satisfied anyone that the chances, in a personal contest, were decidedly in our hero's favor. Herbert was not only a little taller than Oscar, perhaps an inch and a half, but his shoulders were broader, and his frame more muscular.

Oscar flung himself upon Herbert and endeavored to bear him to the ground. But the latter, without an effort, repelled the charge and flung himself free.

This naturally made Oscar more determined to overcome his foe. His face red with passion, he showered blows upon Herbert, which the latter parried with ease. At first he acted wholly upon the defensive, but finding that Oscar's impetuosity did not abate, suddenly closed with him and threw him down.

Oscar rose but little hurt, for Herbert used no unnecessary force, and recommenced the assault. But the result was the same as before. Oscar was almost beside himself with mingled rage and mortification and it is hard to tell how long the contest would have lasted, had not a servant come up and informed the boys that Mrs. Peyton wished to see them immediately. She had witnessed the whole scene from a window and felt called upon to interfere.

"How is this, young gentlemen?" she asked, gravely. "You have scarcely been together twenty minutes and I find you fighting."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Peyton," said Herbert, in a manly tone. "I feel ashamed of myself but Oscar attacked me for claiming to be a gentleman and I am afraid my blood was up, and so we got into a fight."

"How is this, Oscar?" said his mother. "Did you so

wholly lose your politeness as to attack your guest for asserting his claims to be a gentleman?"

"He says he has to work for a living," said Oscar, sullenly.

"So may you some time."

"I am rich."

"You may not always be. At any rate, being rich doesn't insure gentlemanly behavior, as your conduct to-day clearly shows. Herbert, I hope you will excuse my son's rudeness."

"Here is my hand, Oscar," said Herbert, cordially. "Let us be friends."

Oscar hardly knew how to receive this overture, but he was finally thawed by Herbert's manner, and they were soon sauntering about on the best of terms.

At half past eleven, after an inviting lunch, the carriage was ordered and Herbert and Mr. Carroll were driven to the depot, accompanied by Oscar, who went in his mother's place.

Herbert purchased tickets for both, being entrusted with Mr. Carroll's pocketbook for that purpose.

CHAPTER XIX

A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER

I PASS over the route pursued by the travelers from Columbus to Wheeling as it possesses no special interest.

But after leaving Wheeling there is quite a change. Mr. Carroll made Herbert take the seat nearest the window and from time to time Herbert described what he saw to his sightless fellow-traveler.

Northwestern Virginia is very mountainous and the construction of a railway through such a region was a tri-

umph of engineering skill. At times the road makes bold curves, so that the traveler can see opposite him, across an intervening gulf, the track over which the train passed five minutes before. At some places the track is laid on a narrow shelf, midway of the mountain, a steep and rugged ascent on one side, a deep ravine on the other, somewhat like the old diligence road over the Alpine Mt. Cenis.

"How long shall we be in reaching Baltimore, Mr. Carroll?" asked Herbert.

"I believe it takes about twenty-six hours," said the old gentleman. "But I do not mean to go straight through."

"I didn't know what your plan was," said Herbert.

"I have been meaning to tell you. Our tickets will allow us to stop anywhere and resume our journey the next morning, or even stop two or three days, if we like."

"That is convenient."

"Yes. If it had been otherwise I should have purchased the ticket piecemeal. I cannot endure to travel all night. It fatigues me too much."

"Where shall we stop, then?"

"I have not yet quite made up my mind. We will ride till about eight o'clock, and then stop over at whatever place we chance to have reached."

They sat for a while in silence. Then Mr. Carroll inquired, suddenly, "Did you ever fire a pistol, Herbert?"

"Yes, sir," was the surprised reply.

"Then you understand how to use one?"

"Oh, yes, sir. There was a young man in Waverley, the town where I used to live, who owned one, and I sometimes borrowed it to fire at a mark."

"Then I think I will entrust this weapon to your charge," said the old gentleman, drawing from his pocket a handsome pistol and placing it in Herbert's hand.

"Is it loaded, sir?"

"No, not at present. We will have it loaded before

going to bed. I will tell you," he added, in a lower tone, "my reason for going armed. It so happens that I have a large amount of money with me, and of course I feel a little concerned about its safety."

"Perhaps it will be well not to say anything more about it at present, sir," suggested Herbert. "You may be heard by some one."

"No doubt you are right. I will follow your advice."

Herbert would not have thought to give this caution, but, just as Mr. Carroll uttered the words, "I have a large sum of money with me," a man dressed in a rough frieze coat, with black whiskers, and a general appearance which did not prepossess Herbert in his favor, chanced to walk through the car. Whether he caught the words Herbert could not tell but he paused abruptly and, turning back, sank into an unoccupied seat a few feet back of Mr. Carroll.

His attention naturally drawn by this suspicious conduct, Herbert was impelled to glance back once or twice. Each time he met the watchful look of the man fixed upon them. When he saw that the boy was watching him, he turned his head carelessly and commenced whistling.

"I will watch him," thought our hero. "I do not like his looks. If he means mischief, as I think very probable, it is necessary that I should be on my guard against him."

At half past seven o'clock Mr. Carroll signified his intention of getting out at the next station.

"I am beginning to feel tired," he said, "and shall feel the better for a good supper and a night's rest."

"Very well, sir," said Herbert.

It occurred to him that now they would get rid of the man who was watching them so closely.

"If he gets out of the train with us," he thought, "I shall know what it means."

The train slackened its speed and the conductor called out "Oakland!"

"Here we are," said Herbert. "Give me your hand, Mr. Carroll, and I will lead you out."

The old gentleman rose from his seat and guided by Herbert, walked to the car door. At the door Herbert turned and looked back.

The man with the black whiskers had left his seat and was but a few feet behind him.

Herbert did not believe that this was an accident. He felt sure that it meant mischief. But he did not on that account feel nervous or regret that he had assumed a charge which seemed likely to expose him to peril.

There was a covered carriage waiting outside to convey passengers to the only hotel which the village afforded.

"Shall we take the carriage, Mr. Carroll?" asked Herbert.

"Yes," was the reply.

Herbert assisted him in and placed himself in a seat opposite.

There were two or three other passengers but the man with black whiskers was not among them.

"I may be mistaken," thought Herbert, who had rather expected to see him. "Perhaps he lives here, and I have been alarming myself without reason."

A ride of half a mile brought them to a small but comfortable-looking inn. Herbert assisted Mr. Carroll to descend and together they entered.

"We shall want some supper, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll. "You may order some."

"What shall I order, sir?"

"I should like some tea and toast and some beefsteak. If there is anything that you would prefer, you may order that also."

"No, sir, I should not wish anything better than you have ordered."

"Tell them to get it ready as soon as possible. I feel weary with my day's ride, and shall retire early."

"I feel tired too," thought Herbert, "but it won't do for me to sleep. I must keep my eyes open, if possible."

Supper was soon served. The toast was well browned and spread with excellent butter. The steak was juicy and tender, the tea fragrant and strong. Herbert was not in the habit of drinking tea at night but on this occasion he wanted to keep awake and therefore drank two cups.

"Now, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, when they had finished supper, "you may ask the clerk to assign me a large room with a couple of beds in it. I should prefer to have you in the same room with me."

"Very well, sir."

He went to the public room, one portion of which was occupied by the office. As he made his way to the desk, he observed the man with black whiskers on a settee at one end of the room. Herbert caught a stealthy glance directed toward himself but that was all. The man continued smoking, fixing his eyes with apparent interest on a large yellow handbill pasted on the opposite wall, announcing a performance by "The Great American Circus Company" the succeeding evening.

CHAPTER XX

FACING A BURGLAR

HERBERT deliberated as to whether it would be best to inform his aged companion of the suspicious-looking man who appeared to have followed them. He finally decided not to do so, since it would only alarm Mr. Carroll, and prevent his sleeping.

The bedroom was large and square and contained two beds. The larger of these was placed in the corner and this was assigned to the old gentleman. The smaller was

situated between the two side windows and was the more exposed. This Herbert was to occupy.

"Do you know how to load the pistol, Herbert?" asked Mr. Carroll.

"Yes, sir," said Herbert, confidently.

"I don't anticipate any occasion for using it," continued the old gentleman. "Still, it will be best to be prepared."

"So I think, sir."

"You won't be afraid to use it if it should be necessary?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Carroll took a package from his carpetbag and showed it to Herbert.

"This package," he said, "contains five thousand dollars in bank bills. If it were known that I had it, I should be in danger. I suppose it will be best to put it back in the carpetbag."

"If it were mine," said Herbert, "I would not do that."

"Where, then, would you put it?"

"I would place it between the mattresses. If anyone should get into the room he would seize the carpetbag first and, perhaps, make off before he could be stopped."

"I don't know but you are right," said Mr. Carroll. "Perhaps it will be well to put my watch in the same place."

"Yes, sir; I think it would be well."

"You see, Herbert," continued the old gentleman, "how much confidence I repose in you. Knowing where my watch and money are, it would be very easy for you to secure both, and leave me here, destitute and helpless."

"But you don't think there is any danger of my doing so?"

"No," said the old gentleman. "Though our acquaintance is so recent, I feel great confidence in you. As I cannot see the face, I have learned to judge of the character

by the tone of the voice and I am very much mistaken if you are not honest and trustworthy."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert, his face flushed with pleasure at this evidently sincere commendation. "You shall not repent your confidence."

"I am sure of that, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, kindly. "But I must bid you good night. This has been a fatiguing day, and I shall lose no time in getting to sleep."

"Good night. I hope you will sleep well, sir."

Mr. Carroll lay down and his deep, tranquil breathing soon assured our hero that he was asleep. He rose from his bed and examined the windows. All but one were provided with fastenings. But the one on the right-hand side of his bed could be raised from the outside without difficulty.

"I wish I had a nail," thought Herbert. "I could soon make it fast."

But there was none in the room, and he did not wish to go downstairs for one, since he would probably meet the stranger, who would then learn what precautions he was taking, and so, perhaps, vary his attack.

"That window will need watching," thought Herbert. "I wonder whether I shall be able to keep awake."

The excitement of his situation and the strong tea helped him to remain vigilant. His mind was active and his ears open to catch the least sound.

It was only half past ten. Probably the attempt to enter the room would not be made before twelve, at least.

Herbert examined his pistol. It was in excellent order and was provided with two barrels, both of which he loaded. He kept on his pants in order to be prepared for emergencies.

There was an hour and a half to wait before midnight. The minutes passed slowly.

"I wish the fellow would come quick," he thought, "if he is coming so that I might go to sleep."

Time sped on. Herbert could hear the village clock striking twelve, but still all around remained quiet.

It might have been a half an hour later when he heard a slight noise, as he thought, under the window. Jumping softly out of bed, he took a peep out. It was just light enough for him to distinguish a dark form moving about, bearing a ladder. That it was the black whiskered man who had followed them he did not doubt. He heard the top of the ladder softly inclined against the house and then he felt that the critical moment was close at hand.

Herbert's heart began to beat rapidly. He felt that he was taking upon himself a fearful responsibility in shooting this man, as he would probably be obliged to do in self defense. But one thing he resolved upon. He would not take his life. He would even give him a chance by firing the first barrel in the air, in hope of frightening the robber. If that failed, he must wound him. All the while the man was creeping up the ladder.

Herbert had moved aside that he might not be seen.

Soon he perceived the face of the stranger above the window sill. Next, the window was slowly raised and he began to make preparations to enter the room. Then Herbert felt that it was time for him to appear.

Stepping untrepidly to the window, he said: "I know your purpose. Unless you go down instantly I will shoot you."

There was no tremor in his voice as he said this. Courage came with the occasion.

"So you're awake, are you, my chicken?" was the reply. "If you know what's best for yourself, you'll hand over the old man's money."

"Never!" said Herbert, firmly.

"Then I will take it myself, and give you something to remember me by, you little fool!"

He placed his knee on the window sill and prepared to jump in.

"One step farther," said Herbert, "and I fire!"

He displayed the pistol, at the sight of which the burglar hesitated.

"Hold on a bit," said he, pausing. "I'll give you some of the plunder if you'll put up that smoking iron."

"Do you think me a villain, like yourself?"

"By —, you shall repent that," said the robber and he made another attempt to enter.

Click!

There was a sharp report but Herbert had fired in the air and the burglar was silent.

"Confusion!" he exclaimed, "that will rouse the house!"

Then, snipping the carpeting, he determined to jump in, seize it and get away before the people in the house were fairly awake. As he had all but succeeded in getting in, Herbert fired once more, this time hitting him in the shoulder. He uttered a shriek of pain and tumbled backward to the ground.

The two reports alarmed the house.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Carroll, awakened and alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed, sir," said Herbert. "A man just attempted to get in through the window and I have wounded him."

"You are a brave boy," said Mr. Carroll. "Where is he now?"

"He has tumbled to the ground, flat through the shoulder, I think."

There was a loud thumping at the door. Herbert opened it and admitted half a dozen guests, headed by the landlord.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed all in chorus.

"If you will come to the window, gentlemen, I will show you," said Herbert.

They followed him curiously and the sight of the ladder and the wounded man told the story at once.

"Served the rascal right," said the landlord. "Who is he?"

"The black-whiskered man, who was in the barroom last night," said Herbert.

"I remember now, he asked particularly where you were to sleep but I did not suspect his purpose."

"I did," said Herbert, "and kept awake to be ready for him."

"You are a brave lad."

"I only did my duty," said Herbert, modestly.

"Help! help!" groaned the wretch below.

Herbert heard the cry of pain and his heart was filled with pity. The man was, indeed, a villain. He had only been served right as the landlord said. Still, he was a fellow-creature and he was in pain.

"Poor fellow!" he said, compassionately, "I am afraid he is a good deal hurt."

"Poor fellow!" echoed the landlord. "It serves him right."

"Still, he is in pain, and he ought to be cared for."

"He has no claim upon us. He may be there till morning."

"No," said Mr. Carroll. "Herbert is right. He is guilty but he is in pain and it is the part of humanity to succor him. Landlord, if you will have him brought in and send for the doctor, you may look to me for your pay."

"Yet, he was going to rob you, sir," said the landlord.

"Yes, that is true, but you don't know how strongly he was tempted."

"He looks like a hard ticket. I didn't like to give him a bed but we can't well refuse travelers if they have money. I made him pay in advance."

A lantern was lighted and the whole company followed the landlord out.

"Well," said he, throwing the light of the candle full on the sufferer's face, "you've got yourself into a fine pickle, haven't you?"

"Oh," growled the burglar, "if it hadn't been for that cursed boy!"

"You'd have got off with the old gentleman's money."

"Are you in much pain?" asked Harbert, bending over him.

There was something in his voice that betrayed the compassion he really felt.

The burglar looked up.

"You're the boy that wounded me, isn't you?" he asked.

"Yea," said Harbert.

"Come, you! I don't know but you've killed me. I'm shot through the shoulder. Then, that cursed lad! I feel as if I had broken my back."

"I did not want to shoot you," said Harbert.

"What did you do it for, then?"

"Because you forced me to it. You were after Mr. Carron's money."

"Didn't I offer to divide with you?"

"Yes, but, of course, I would not agree to that."

"Are you so much better than common folk?"

"I don't know about that. I would not steal."

"Take him up," said the landlord to the hotel servants. "He don't deserve it, but I've promised the old gentleman we'd see to him. Tom White, you may go for the doctor."

Two men approached and attempted to lift the wounded burglar. He uttered a shriek of pain, and exclaimed, "You'll murder me!"

"Let me lift him," said Harbert. "Perhaps you were too rough."

At length he was got into the house and laid on a bed in a small room on the first floor.

"Do you feel better?" asked Harbert.

"A little."

"Do you think you have broken any bones in falling?"

"I thought so at first, but perhaps I am only bruised."

"When the doctor comes he will extract the bullet, and relieve you of a good deal of your pain."

"You are a strange boy," said the burglar.

"Why am I?"

"You shot me, and yet you pretend to be sorry for me now."

"So I am."

"Then why did you shoot me?"

"I have already told you. Because I was obliged to. I shot the first barrel in the air."

"By accident?"

"No; I thought it would alarm you and I might save the money without injuring you."

"Do you really mean that?"

"Yes."

"And you don't have any ill will against me now?"

"No."

"That is strange."

"I don't know why it should be."

"I suppose I ought to hate you because you have brought me to this pass," said the burglar, thoughtfully, "but I don't. That is strange, too."

"I am glad you feel so," said Herbert. "I am very sorry for your pain, and I will do what I can to relieve it."

"I have no money to pay the landlord and the doctor."

"Mr. Carroll says he will pay all needed expenses."

"The man I wanted to rob?"

"Yes."

"Then, hang me, if I ain't ashamed of trying to rob him," said the burglar, earnestly.

"Have you ever robbed anyone before?"

"No, I haven't. I'm a rough customer and have done plenty of mean things, but this is the first job of the

kind I ever attempted. I was hard up. I've tried and failed and that's the end of it. It's my first attempt at burglary."

"I hope it will be the last."

"You may bet your life on that."

"Then," said Herbert, quietly, "I will intercede with Mr. Carroll and ask him not to have you arrested."

"Will you do that?" asked the wounded man, eagerly.

"I promise it."

"If you will, boy, I will bless you, and if God would listen to such a scamp as I am, I'd pray for you."

"He will listen to you," said Herbert. "Try to lead a better life, and He will help you."

"I wish I'd met with such as you before," said the burglar. "I'd have been a better man than I am."

Here the doctor entered, and Herbert gave place to him. The wound was discovered not to be serious and the bullet being extracted, the sufferer found relief.

CHAPTER XXI

HERBERT'S REWARD

"I owe the safety of my money to you, my brave boy," said Mr. Carroll, the next morning.

"I only did my duty," said Herbert.

"But in doing your duty, you displayed a courage and fidelity rare in one of your age."

"I am glad you approve my conduct," said Herbert.

"If you continue to deserve as well of those who employ you I am sure you will achieve success."

"I hope so, sir," said our hero. "I shall try to do my duty in whatever situation in life I may be placed."

"What are your plans when you reach New York?"

"I shall try to find a place in a store, or counting-room."

"Have you friends in the city?"

"No, sir; I have only myself to look to."

"Only yourself! It is a bold undertaking."

"Don't you think I shall succeed?"

"I do not doubt that you will succeed after finding a place but that is the difficulty."

"I supposed there must be plenty to do in a great city like New York."

"There is a great deal to do but there are a great many to do it."

"Perhaps," said Herbert, "many fail to get work because they are particular what they do. If I can find nothing better to do I will black boots."

"With such a spirit, I think you will succeed. But perhaps I can smooth away some of the difficulties. I know a firm in New York, connections of our family to whom I will give you a letter of introduction."

"I shall feel very much obliged to you for such a letter. It will do me a great deal of good."

"I will gladly write it but now let us go down to breakfast."

After breakfast was over they looked in upon the wounded man.

"How do you feel this morning?" asked Herbert.

"Rather stiff, but I am not in such pain as I was."

"I am glad to hear it."

"That is the gentleman I was going to rob?"

"Yes."

"Is he—did you say anything to him about not prosecuting me?" he asked, nervously.

"Be under no apprehension," said Mr. Carroll, mildly. "I do not care to punish you more than you have been punished. I prefer that you should lead a better life."

"I will try to do so, sir; but I was poor, and that made the temptation stronger."

"I can easily believe it. Are you wholly without means?"

"Nearly so."

"Here, then, is a purse containing a hundred dollars." The wounded man looked up in surprise.

"There ain't many that would pay a man for trying to rob them," he said.

"I do not pay you for that," said Mr. Carroll, "but because I do not wish you to be subjected to a similar temptation again."

"Well, sir," he said, "all I can say is that I am very much obliged to you and I hope you will be rewarded for your kindness."

"It is easier to lead men than to drive them," said Mr. Carroll, as they left the chamber. "This man is rough, and not troubled much with a conscience, but harshness would make him still worse."

"Yes, sir," said Herbert; "I think you are right."

After breakfast they resumed their journey. In due time they reached Baltimore and remained overnight. On the succeeding day they arrived at Philadelphia, which was the termination of Mr. Carroll's journey.

"If I were going to a hotel, Herbert," said Mr. Carroll, "I would invite you to remain with me a day or two; but I shall proceed at once to the house of a friend and shall not feel at liberty to invite you."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I think it will be best for me to go on to New York at once. I am anxious to get to work as soon as possible."

"It is a praiseworthy feeling," said the old gentleman. "Life lies before you. I shall hope to meet you again; but if not, be assured that I shall always remember with pleasure my young traveling companion."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert.

"I shall not soon forget the essential service which you have rendered me," continued the old gentleman.

"Don't think of it, sir," said Herbert, modestly. "Anyone would have done the same thing in my place."

"I am by no means sure of that. At any rate, the obligation remains. You must allow me to acknowledge it in some measure."

Mr. Carroll handed his pocketbook to Herbert.

"Will you oblige me," he said, "by counting the bills?" Herbert did so.

"There are sixty-five dollars," he said, passing it back.

"Will you take out fifty dollars?"

"Yes, sir—I have done it."

"That sum you will oblige me by keeping," said Mr. Carroll. "I hope it may be of service to you."

"You give me so much money?" said Herbert, in surprise.

"It is but a very small sum compared with that which you have saved me."

"I don't think I ought to take so much," said Herbert.

"You need not hesitate, my young friend. I am blessed with abundant means and very well able to part with it. Besides, it is only one per cent. of the money which you have been instrumental in saving me."

"I thank you very much for the gift, Mr. Carroll," said our hero, "and still more for the kind manner in which you give it to me."

"You accept it then? That is well," said the old gentleman with satisfaction. "There is one thing more. You remember that I spoke to you of a business firm in Pearl street, New York, with the members of which I am acquainted. Last evening I prepared a letter of introduction to them for you. Here is it."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I was very fortunate in meeting with one so able and willing to assist me."

"You are very welcome to all the help I am able to

give you. I must trouble you to do me one more service. If you will find me a cab, I will go at once to my friend's house."

There was a cordial leave-taking and Herbert once more found himself alone. But with more than sixty dollars in his pocket he felt rich and looked forward eagerly to his arrival in the great city, where he hoped to deserve and win success.

CHAPTER XXII

ROBBED IN THE NIGHT

HERBERT entered the cars and took a seat by the window. It was yet early and there were but few persons in the car. But as the hour for starting approached, it gradually filled up.

A young man, apparently about nineteen, walked up the aisle and inquired, "Is this seat engaged?"

"No," said Herbert, removing his bundle.

"Then, if you have no objection, I'll take possession."

He seated himself, and commenced a conversation.

"Going to New York?" he asked.

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Are you going on a visit?"

"No; I am going to live there."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"So am I. Suppose we hitch teams."

"I don't understand."

"Suppose we go to some hotel together. I have been there before and can tell you where to go."

Herbert did not exactly like the appearance or fancy the free and easy manners of his new acquaintance but he felt lonely and hardly knew what excuse to make. He therefore gave his assent to the arrangement proposed.

"What's your name?" asked his new friend, familiarly.

"Herbert Mason."

"Mine is Greenleaf—Peter Greenleaf. Have you come from a distance?"

"From Waverley, in Ohio, not far from Cincinnati."

"I am from Philadelphia. I've been in a store there but I didn't like the style and I concluded to go to New York. There's more chance for a fellow there."

"What sort of a store were you in?"

"Dry goods store—Hatch & Macy. Old Hatch is a mean skinflint and wouldn't pay me half what I was worth. And how much do you think I got?"

"I don't know."

"Only seven dollars a week. If I hadn't made something another way, I couldn't have paid my expenses."

"I think you might live on seven dollars a week."

This was before the war had increased the expenses of living.

"Couldn't do it. Board cost me four dollars a week, and that only left three for other expenses. My cigars cost me nearly that. Then I wanted to go to the theater now and then, and, of course, I must dress like a gentleman."

"How did you manage, then?"

"Oh, I made so much more by banking."

"By banking?" repeated Herbert, in astonishment.

"Yes; only it was a faro bank. I used to pick up considerable that way, sometimes."

"A faro bank!" repeated Herbert, in dismay. "Why, that's the same as gambling, isn't it?"

"Well, what's the odds? You take your chance, and you may win or lose. It's a pretty fair thing."

After this confession, Herbert became, more than ever, doubtful whether he should care to remain long in the company of his present companion.

"Where are you going to stop when you get to New York?" inquired Peter.

"I don't know anything about the city. I suppose I shall have to go to a hotel first."

"Suppose we go to French's Hotel?"

"Where is that?"

"Near the park. It's on the European plan. You pay fifty cents a day for your room and whatever you please for your meals."

"I think I shall like that. I shall want to get into a boarding house as soon as possible."

"All right. We'll take a room together at the hotel."

This arrangement was not to Herbert's taste, but he did not care to offend his companion by objecting to it, so by his silence he gave consent.

"What are you going to do in New York?" he asked.

"I shall look up a situation. I won't take less than fifteen dollars a week. A man of my experience ought to be worth that. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Herbert, dubiously, though it occurred to him that if he were an employer he would not be likely to engage such a clerk at any price.

In course of time the terminus of the road was reached and, crossing over from Jersey City, Herbert found himself, for the first time in his life, in the noise and whirl of the great city.

"And I am actually to live here," thought Herbert. "I wonder what Mr. Holden would say if he knew where I was?" Uncertain as his prospects were, he felt very glad that he was out of the clutches of the petty despot whose chief pleasure was to make him uncomfortable. Here the future was full of possibilities of good fortune; there, it was certain discomfort and little to hope for.

"Where is the hotel you spoke of?" he asked, turning to Greenleaf.

"I'll lead you to it."

They walked up to Broadway, then up by the Astor House and across the park to the hotel.

"Show us a room with two beds," said Peter to the clerk.

"Have you any baggage?" asked the clerk.

"No," said Greenleaf, carelessly. "Mine was checked through from Philadelphia. I shan't send for it till morning."

"Then I must ask you to pay in advance."

"All right. Fifty cents, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Mason," said Greenleaf, "have you got a dollar about you? I've got nothing less than a ten."

Herbert drew out a dollar and paid for himself and his companion.

They were now shown up to a room on the third floor, which proved to be a very comfortable one looking out on the street. Herbert was glad to get a chance to wash himself thoroughly after the dusty journey. This over, they went down to the restaurant connected with the hotel and took a hearty meal. Greenleaf made an effort to have Herbert pay for both, but this time Herbert also had a bill to change. It was rather a suspicious circumstance, he thought, that Greenleaf, who had no bill smaller than a ten, paid for his meal out of a one-dollar bill.

After supper Greenleaf bought a couple of cigars and offered Herbert one.

"No, thank you," said our hero.

"Don't you smoke?"

"No."

"Where have you been living all your life? I couldn't get along without my cigar."

"Don't you think it hurtful to a boy to smoke?"

"I don't know about that. I'm a man now, but I've smoked ever since I was a boy."

"But, it's expensive."

"Yes, that's so. I expect I've smoked a thousand dollars' worth of cigars in the course of my life."

"Don't you wish you had the money instead?"

"Yes; I should rather like the money, but I shouldn't be half the man I am if I hadn't smoked."

After smoking, Greenleaf expressed his intention of going to the theater. Herbert preferred to go to bed early, feeling rather tired. He was kept awake at first by the bustle of the street outside, as well as by the exciting thoughts that crowded upon him suggested by his actual arrival in the city. But at last he fell asleep.

He slept soundly through the night. But toward morning he had a dream in which Abner Holden figured. His old employer seemed to be approaching him with a smile of exultation and was about to lay violent hands upon him when he awoke. It was broad daylight, being already seven o'clock in the morning. Herbert remembered where he was, and looked across the room for Greenleaf. But he was not visible.

"I didn't think he was a fellow to rise early," thought Herbert. "I suppose he is downstairs. I might as well get up, too."

Herbert jumped out of bed and washed his face and hands. He then proceeded to dress.

"I wonder Greenleaf didn't wake me up," he thought.

But the reason was too soon made evident. Happening to put his hand in the pocket where he usually kept his pocketbook, he was startled at finding it empty. He began to hunt round upon the floor, thinking it possible that it might have dropped out. It was not to be found.

It was not until this moment that a suspicion entered his mind concerning his companion.

"Is it possible," he thought, "that Greenleaf has been mean enough to strip me of my money?"

Herbert disliked to think badly of anyone. It was barely possible that Greenleaf had taken his money by way of playing a practical joke upon him and he might now be downstairs, waiting to be amused by Herbert's look of

dismay when he discovered that he was penniless. Drowning men will catch at straws and Herbert tried to think this was probably the way it had happened.

"Greenleaf is rather a hard case, according to his own account," he said to himself, "but I can't believe he would be mean enough to rob me. I will go downstairs and see if I can find him."

Accordingly he made his way to the office.

Herbert went up and spoke to the clerk inside.

"Have you seen my roommate?" he asked.

"What is the number of your room?"

"No. —."

"I remember now. He has gone."

"Gone!" echoed Herbert, in dismay.

"Yes; didn't you know of it?"

"He went away while I was asleep. How long since did he go?"

"He came to the office two hours ago and said he should not require the room any longer."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No."

Such an expression of dismay overspread Herbert's face that the clerk could not help observing it.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked.

"Yes; he has robbed me of my pocketbook."

"Whew!" whistled the clerk. "How much had you?"

"About sixty dollars."

"You're unlucky. Have you got nothing left?"

It flashed across Herbert's mind that when he had paid for his supper he had changed a five-dollar bill and placed the balance, about four dollars and a half, in his vest pocket. He at once felt in that pocket and found it still there.

"I have a little left," he said.

CHAPTER XXIII

A BUSINESS CALL

IT was certainly a startling discovery for Herbert to make, that out of sixty dollars he had only four left, now that he had paid for another day at the hotel.

"I will make a good breakfast, at any rate," said Herbert, philosophically. "Afterwards, I will consider what to do."

He ordered a substantial breakfast, which, even at the low prices of a dozen years ago, amounted to fifty cents. After paying at the desk, he went outside.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning, and this, with the comfortable feeling produced by having eaten a good breakfast, gave him courage for the new career upon which he was about to enter.

While considering what he should do first, the thought of the letter given him by Mr. Carroll flashed upon him. He felt for it hastily and was rejoiced to find that was safe. Greenleaf had not taken that away, fortunately.

He looked at the direction. It was addressed to

"Messrs. Godfrey & Lynn, No. —, Pearl St."

It was not sealed and was probably meant to be read by Herbert. Our hero opened the letter, curious as to what Mr. Carroll had written about him.

Here it is:

MY DEAR MR. GODFREY: This letter will be handed you by a young friend of mine, by name Herbert Mason. My acquaintance with him has been brief but he has been able, by his coolness and bravery, to do me a most important service, having saved me from being robbed of a

large sum of money while acting as my escort from Ohio to Philadelphia. I have talked with him freely about his plans and find that he will reach New York without friends and with a very small sum of money, hoping before it is gone to secure a place in some countingroom, where he can make an honest living. I feel a strong interest in his success, and am persuaded that wherever he is placed he will show rare capacity and fidelity. I wish it might be in your power to receive him into your own countingroom. At any rate, may I rely on you to act a friendly part by my young friend and to exert your influence toward procuring him a position elsewhere, if you cannot employ him yourself? Anything that you may have it in your power to do for Herbert, I shall consider as a favor done to myself.

I have just left my daughter, who, with her family, is well. Sincerely, your friend,

JAMES CARROLL.

"That is a very kind letter," thought Herbert, gratefully. "I hope it will do me good."

He decided to call and deliver it the same forenoon. If he had not been robbed he would, first, have gone about the city, which was entirely new to him. But with less than four dollars between himself and utter destitution, he felt that he had no time for sight-seeing.

He would wait till ten o'clock, thinking that the heads of the firm might not reach the countingroom till about that time. It was now eight o'clock only.

"Shine yer boots?" said a ragged urchin.

It occurred to Herbert that it would be best to look as well as possible when visiting Godfrey & Lynn and he decided to have his shoes blacked, if it were not too expensive.

"What are you going to charge me?" he asked.

"Ten cents."

"It's too much," said Herbert.

"Well, five, then," said the bootblack, coming down to his regular price.

"Do you get much to do?" asked our hero.

"Some days I gets considerable."

"How much do you make?"

"Pleasant days I makes a dollar but when it rains there ain't much to do."

"How much do you have to pay for sleeping?"

"Six cents."

"Six cents!" repeated Herbert, in surprise. "Where can you get lodged for that?"

"At the lodgin' house, Fulton and Nassau streets."

"Well," thought Herbert, "I needn't starve. If I can't get anything better to do, I can buy a box of blacking and a brush and set up in business for myself."

To be sure, this would not be an agreeable occupation, but Herbert was bound to make a living by honest labor.

After his shoes were brushed he walked up Broadway. It was a wonderful sight to the country-bred boy, with its busy and bustling crowds and its throng of vehicles, never ceasing wholly, save at the dead hours of night. Certainly there must be room for one more worker. So, on the whole, the busy scene gave him courage and he sauntered along as cheerfully as if he were not next door to a beggar.

Being a stranger in the city, he had to inquire for Pearl street from a policeman. He followed the direction and found it at length. But the number of which he was in search was not so easily found for the street meandered in a very perplexing way, so that at times he was not quite sure whether he were still in it.

At last he found the place. It was a large, solid-looking building, four stories in height. Inside there was a large apartment occupying the entire first floor, with the exception of a room in the rear, which had been partitioned off for a countingroom. The partition was of glass, and as he looked from the entrance he could see a couple of high

desks and a table. "Is this Godfrey & Lynn's?" he asked of a porter at the entrance.

"Yes," said the porter.

"I want to see Mr. Godfrey."

"I don't think he's in. You can go to the office and inquire."

Herbert passed through the warehouse and, pausing a moment before the door, opened it and entered.

There were but two persons in the office. One was a thin-faced man, who sat on a high stool at one of the desks, making entries in a ledger. This was the bookkeeper, Mr. Pratt. He had a high forehead naturally—made still higher by the loss of his front hair. Apparently, he was not a man to enjoy conviviality, or to shine on any festive occasion.

Besides Mr. Pratt, there was a boy of about Herbert's age. He was fashionably dressed and his hair was arranged with exceeding care. In fact, as Herbert entered, he was examining the set of his necktie in a little hand glass which he had taken from his coat pocket.

"Have you copied that bill, Thomas?" asked Mr. Pratt, looking up.

"Not yet, sir."

"You have been long enough about it. Put back that glass. You are quite too much troubled about your appearance."

"Yes, sir."

"If I didn't look any better than some people," said Thomas, *sotto voce*, "I shouldn't look in a glass very often."

Herbert naturally concluded that Mr. Pratt was the man to whom his inquiries should be addressed.

"I would like to see Mr. Godfrey, sir," he said.

"He is out of the city."

"Out of the city!" repeated Herbert, disappointed.
"When will he be back?"

"Not till day after to-morrow."

Herbert's countenance fell. In his reduced circumstances he could hardly afford to wait two days.

"Is Mr. Lynn likely to be in soon?" he asked.

"No; he is sick at home. He may not be here for a week. Perhaps I can attend to your business," he added. "What is it?"

"I think," said Herbert, "that I will wait till day after to-morrow, if you think Mr. Godfrey will be back then. I have a letter for him."

"If it's a business letter, you had better leave it."

"It is a letter of introduction," said Herbert. "I would rather present it in person."

"Very well," and Mr. Pratt went back to his ledger.

Thomas looked critically at the boy who had a letter of introduction to Mr. Godfrey, and said to himself, "He got his clothes from a country tailor, I'll bet a hat."

CHAPTER XXIV

FINDING A BOARDING PLACE

HERBERT left the countingroom of Godfrey & Lynn, not a little depressed in spirits. The two days which must elapse before he could see Mr. Godfrey were to him a formidable delay. By that time his money would be almost exhausted. Then suppose Mr. Godfrey could do nothing for him immediately but only hold out the promise of future assistance, how was he to live? After all, he might have to realize his thought of the morning, and join the ranks of the bootblacks. If Greenleaf had not robbed him he could have afforded to wait. He felt sore and indignant about that.

He walked about, rather aimlessly, feeling miserable enough. But, all at once, it occurred to him, "Would it

not be cheaper for him to take board by the week in some boarding house?" He found that his hotel bill would be three dollars and a half a week, while his meals would make as much more; in all, seven dollars.

In the reading room of the hotel he found a daily paper and carefully ran his eye down the advertisements for boarders and lodgers. The following attracted his attention:

"BOARDERS WANTED—A few mechanics may obtain comfortable rooms and board at No. — Stanton street, at three dollars per week."

"Three dollars a week!" repeated Herbert. "Less than half my present rate. I must go at once and secure it."

He found the way to Stanton street, and found that No. — was a shabby-looking house in a shabby neighborhood. But he could not afford to be fastidious.

A middle-aged woman, with a red handkerchief tied around her head, and a broom in her hand, opened the door and looked inquiringly at our hero.

"What's wanted?" she said.

"I saw your advertisement for boarders," said Herbert.

"Yes; I advertised in the paper this morning."

"Will you let me see your rooms?"

"Who are you looking for?"

"Myself."

"I don't know as you'll be suited. My price is low, and I can't give first-class accommodations for three dollars."

"No; I suppose not."

"Come up, if you would like to see what I've got."

The interior of the house was shabby like the outside, the oilcloth carpet faded, and the wall paper torn off in places. The stairs, too, were narrow and uncarpeted.

On the third floor, his guide threw open the door of a dark little hall bedroom, meagerly furnished.

"I could give you this room by yourself," she said, "or a larger room with some one else."

"I would rather be alone."

"That's the only single room I have. Will you take it?"

"I think so," said Herbert.

"When do you want to come?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Very well. I shall expect a deposit, so that I may be sure the room is let."

"How much?"

"A dollar will do."

Herbert handed a dollar to Mrs. Morgan and went downstairs and out into the air again.

"Well," he thought, "I'm sure of a home, such as it is, for a week. In that time something must turn up."

Examining his pocketbook, he found that he had two dollars and a half left. Of that sum, two dollars must be reserved to pay the balance of his week's board. Out of the remaining fifty cents he must pay for his meals until the next morning. He wished that he had proposed to come to breakfast, but it was too late now.

He decided that the cheapest food he could buy was a five-cent loaf at some baker's. This would probably last him through the day and might prove sufficient for breakfast also, since he would take a regular dinner, though he doubted, from what he had seen of the establishment in Stanton street, whether it would be a very inviting repast. But it was the best he could afford, and that was all he need consider.

Late in the afternoon it occurred to Herbert to wonder where his Uncle Stanton lived. Not that he had any intention of applying to him for assistance but he felt curious to see how his uncle was situated.

He learned from the directory that his uncle's store was in lower Broadway, while his house was in West Seventeenth street, between Fifth and Sixth avenues.

"I should like to see what sort of a house Uncle Benjamin lives in," thought Herbert.

There was nothing to prevent his gratifying this wish, as he had plenty of time on his hands. He decided, as it was only five o'clock, to take a leisurely walk up Broadway, noticing his uncle's place of business on the way.

A few minutes brought him in front of the latter—an imposing-looking building, with all the appearance of belonging to a prosperous merchant. Appearances are deceitful, to be sure and no doubt there are some merchants, as outwardly prosperous, who might profitably change places with their head clerks. But Herbert naturally judged from appearances, and he could not help contrasting in his mind his own condition with that of his uncle's. But he was too manly to be despondent on this account, and thought rather, "I am young and ready to work. Some time, if I am patient and work hard, I may be as well off as Uncle Benjamin."

He pursued his way uptown, finding it a longer walk than he anticipated, arriving at half past five at Union square and went down Seventeenth street.

Carefully noting the numbers, he found his uncle's house. It was a handsome mansion and seemed appropriate as the residence of a rich New York merchant.

"So my uncle lives here," thought Herbert and there rose in his mind the memory of the humble Western home where he and his mother had struggled against poverty, while his uncle coldly held aloof and forbore to offer the assistance which he could so well afford.

"If I had a sister, I could never treat her like that," thought Herbert, indignantly. "He would not help my mother. I will starve before I ask him to help me."

He paused a moment on the opposite side of the street to look at his uncle's house. While he was standing there, a boy of about his own age came down the street whistling and ascended the steps of his uncle's house.

"I wonder if that is my cousin Tom," thought Herbert. While he looked, he was struck by something familiar in the appearance of this boy. Where had he seen him before?

All at once it flashed upon him. It was the same boy he had seen in the countingroom of Godfrey & Lynn. He knew him by his dandified dress and his face.

This was certainly a strange coincidence, that his cousin, for it was doubtless he, should be the first boy he encountered after reaching New York. It would be still stranger if Mr. Godfrey should offer him employment and he should find himself a clerk in the same office as the son of his rich uncle.

Herbert walked thoughtfully back, and on reaching his room ate the remainder of the loaf which he had purchased at the baker's in the morning.

CHAPTER XXV

GETTING A SITUATION

THE next morning Herbert reported at his new boarding place. He found the fare far from first-class, while his fellow-boarders appeared at the table mostly in shirt sleeves. Our hero would have preferred a greater degree of neatness both in the table and in the guests but he felt that he would be lucky if he should find himself able to pay his expenses even here.

He waited impatiently for the next day, when Mr. Godfrey would return. Upon the success of the interview with him much depended.

At length it came, and Herbert once more set out for the warehouse in Pearl street. He entered without question and made his way to the countingroom. Looking

through the glass door, he saw his cousin and the book-keeper. But, besides these, there was an elderly gentleman, rather stout, with a pleasant face, the expression of which reassured him.

"Is Mr. Godfrey in?" he asked on entering.

"That is my name. What can I do for you?" said Mr. Godfrey, turning toward him.

"I have a letter for you, sir," said Herbert, producing it from his pocket.

Mr. Godfrey held out his hand for it, and ran his eye rapidly over its contents.

"So your name is Herbert Mason?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

At mention of this name, Tom Stanton wheeled rapidly round on his stool and surveyed our hero with intense curiosity. He knew that Herbert Mason was the name of his cousin. Could it be possible that this boy was the cousin whom he had never seen? A little later, and he was convinced of it.

"You have just come from Ohio, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"My friend, Mr. Carroll, writes me that you were instrumental in saving him from being robbed while acting as his escort to Philadelphia."

"It wasn't worth mentioning," said Herbert, modestly.

Mr. Godfrey noticed his modest tone and it pleased him—modesty not being an unvarying characteristic of young America.

"My friend refers to it as an important service. I should like to know the particulars."

Herbert gave a brief but intelligent account of the attempted burglary, passing over his own achievement as lightly as possible. But it was easy to infer that he had acted with bravery and self-possession.

"You behaved in a very creditable manner," said Mr. Godfrey, approvingly. "Many boys would have lost their

self-possession. You have come to New York in search of employment, Mr. Carroll writes me."

"Yes, sir."

"I don't, of course, know how you were situated in Ohio," said the merchant; "but as a general rule I think boys make a mistake in leaving the country for the city. Here the competition for work is sharp and there is a surplus of laborers in every department of labor. Still," he proceeded, scanning Herbert's earnest face, "you look like a boy capable of making his way if an opportunity offers. You have but little money, Mr. Carroll writes."

"I have lost nearly all I had," said Herbert.

"You have met with a loss? Tell me about it. Indeed, I should be glad if you would confide to me freely your situation and hopes and then I shall be better able to help you."

"I am almost ashamed to tell you how I was taken in," said our hero. "I suppose I ought to have been more prudent."

He recounted the manner in which Greenleaf had robbed him. Mr. Godfrey listened with interest and so did Tom Stanton, who burst into a laugh when the narration was concluded.

"What are you laughing at, Thomas?" asked the merchant, rather sharply.

"I was thinking how neatly he was taken in," said Tom, a little abashed.

"I should apply a different word to it," said Mr. Godfrey. "It appears to me the height, or rather the depth of meanness, to take advantage of a boy's confidence, and defraud him so scandalously. How much money have you left, Herbert?"

"Forty cents, sir."

"Only forty cents to begin life with in a great city!"

"Yes, sir, I have paid my board in advance for a week."

"Where do you board?"

"In Stanton street."

Tom turned up his nose at the name of this street, which he knew was very far from fashionable.

"What board do you pay?"

"Three dollars a week, sir."

"A poor place, probably?"

"Yes, sir, but I could afford no better."

"You are sensible to accommodate yourself to circumstances. Mr. Carroll has asked me to do something for you and I am disposed to oblige him, not wholly for his sake, but partly for your own, for you seem to me a very modest and sensible boy. Mr. Pratt, do we need another boy?"

"No, sir, I don't think we do."

"Well, business will be brisker by and by. I think you can find a little for this young man to do in the meantime. He can go to the post office and I believe I have a little extra writing to be done. Pass him a pen, and let him give us a specimen of his handwriting."

Fortunately Herbert was a handsome writer.

"Very neat," said the merchant. "By the way, Herbert, I suppose, of course, you know nothing of French?"

"Yes, sir, I can read it pretty well."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Godfrey, surprised. "Then you can be of service to me, that is, if you know it well enough. I received, this morning, a letter from a silk house at Lyons, a part of which I don't quite understand. The fact is, my French is rather poor. Do you think you could help me translate it?"

"If you will show me the letter, I will try, sir."

Our hero ran his eye rapidly over it and then rendered it into English in a clear and grammatical way.

"Bless me, you're quite a scholar," said Mr. Godfrey. "I understand now. You've made it all plain. Where did you learn so much French?"

"My father taught me, sir. He also taught me Latin."

"Indeed, I congratulate you on possessing so good an education. Latin, however, isn't so much in my way. I haven't many Latin correspondents."

"I suppose not, sir," said Herbert, laughing.

"Still it does no harm to know something of it."

Tom Stanton had listened with considerable surprise, mingled with mortification, to what had passed. It appeared then, that his country cousin, whom he had looked upon as a country boor, was his superior in education, and, as Tom secretly knew, in courage. And now he was going to be his fellow-clerk. He felt jealous and angry.

"How much can you live upon economically?" asked the merchant.

"I know little of the city," said Herbert. "You can judge better than I, sir."

"You pay three dollars a week board. You'll need double that amount. Mr. Pratt, you may pay him six dollars a week. He will come to work to-morrow and you may pay him Saturday as if it was a whole week."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert, gratefully. "You are very kind."

"Do your duty and I shall be satisfied."

Tom Stanton listened in indignant surprise. He only got four dollars a week and here was a country boy placed over his head.

"Won't you give me six dollars a week, also?" he said.

"Why should I?"

"Don't I deserve as much as he?"

"Perhaps you do. But I don't give it to Herbert because he earns it, for it is not likely that he will do so at present. But he has no other resources. You have a comfortable home and are not obliged to pay for your board out of your wages."

"No, I hope not," said Tom.

"Therefore you do not need as much as he does. You

are not entitled to this explanation, but I give it, nevertheless, that you may know my motives."

Tom began to feel a dislike for his cousin and determined to injure him in the estimation of the firm.

"I hope the fellow won't find out the relationship between us," he said to himself. "He'd be calling me Cousin Tom all the time and I don't care about owning a cousin that lives in Stanton street."

Tom need not have troubled himself. Herbert had no idea of claiming relationship, though, as we know, he was fully aware of its existence.

CHAPTER XXVI

A FAMILY COUNCIL

As soon as he was released from business Tom Stanton hurried home to impart the unexpected intelligence that his cousin Herbert had arrived in the city. The news gave no particular pleasure in the Stanton homestead.

"Did you tell him who you were, Thomas?" asked his mother.

"Catch me doing it!" said Tom. "I ain't quite a fool. I don't care about owning any pauper relations."

"He isn't a pauper," said Mr. Stanton.

"He's the next door to it," said Tom, carelessly.

"Thomas is right," said Mrs. Stanton. "You may depend upon it, Mr. Stanton, that when this boy finds you out he will apply to you for assistance."

"Possibly he may."

"I hope you won't be such a fool as to encourage him."

"If he were in actual distress, my dear," said Mr. Stanton, "I should feel that I ought to do something."

"Then you'd allow yourself to be imposed upon. He is a stout boy, and capable of earning his own living."

"He might get sick," suggested Mr. Stanton, who was not so hard-hearted as his wife.

"Then let him go to the hospital. It's provided for such cases."

"Is Herbert good-looking?" asked Maria.

"He won't get a prize for his beauty," said Tom, disparagingly.

"Is he homely?"

"No," said Tom, reluctantly. "I suppose he'll pass; but he's countrified. He hasn't got any style," and he glanced complacently at his own reflection in a mirror, for Tom was vain of his personal appearance, though by no means as good-looking as Herbert.

"I should like to see Herbert," said Maria, who had her share of female curiosity, and thought it would be pleasant to have a cousin to escort her round.

"Perhaps I'd better invite him round to dinner to-morrow," said Thomas, sarcastically.

"I wish you would."

"Thomas will do no such thing!" said Mrs. Stanton, decidedly. "It's my opinion that the less notice we take of him the better. We don't want any poor relations coming here to get their living out of us."

"Just my sentiments, mother," said Tom Stanton.

"It doesn't seem quite right," said Mr. Stanton, uncomfortably, "to neglect my sister's child."

"Don't make yourself ridiculous with your scruples, Mr. Stanton," said his wife. "It's the boy's duty to take care of himself. It would only do him harm and lead to false expectations, if we allowed him the run of the house."

"Besides," said Tom, "I shouldn't want to have Tom Paget and Percy Mortimer ask me who he is and have to tell them that he is my cousin."

This argument had considerable weight with Mr. Stanton, who was anxious to elevate himself in society and

looked with complacency upon the school acquaintances Tom had formed with the scions of distinguished families.

"Well," said he, "let it be as you will. We won't go out of our way to invite the boy here, but if he presents himself we must take a little notice of him."

"I don't see why he couldn't have stayed in the country," said Mrs. Stanton. "It was the best place for him."

"Of course it was," said Tom.

"He could have had no other object than to seek us out, and see what he could get out of us."

"He has secured a place it seems and would not be likely to give it up."

"It's a great pity he should have got into the same counting-room with Tom. He will presume on the relationship as soon as he finds it out."

Mrs. Stanton need not have been alarmed for Herbert was too high-spirited to seek an intimacy where he had reason to think it would be disagreeable. But his aunt knew nothing of him, and judged him by herself.

"He's there, and it can't be helped," said Mr. Stanton.

"At any rate, if he does stay in the city," persisted Mrs. Stanton, "I hope you'll give him to understand that he needn't call here more than once in three months. That is as much as he can expect."

"After all, he is my sister's son," said Mr. Stanton. "I can't feel that this would be quite kind in us."

"Leave it to me, then. If you're too soft-hearted, Mr. Stanton, I will take all the responsibility, and the blame, if there is any."

"Well, I think you've said enough on the subject," said her husband. "Tom, run upstairs and bring me a cigar. You know where I keep the cigar box."

"You'd better send a servant, father," said Tom, coolly.

"It appears to me you are getting lazy, Thomas," said his father.

"Thomas is right," said Mrs. Stanton. "What do we keep servants for but to run errands?"

"Still Tom might have obliged me in such a little matter."

"You shouldn't have asked him, Mr. Stanton. You seem to forget that we are not living in the style of half a dozen years ago."

Mr. Stanton said no more but sent a servant in Tom's place.

The next morning Tom went to the counting-room, fully expecting that Herbert would claim relationship as soon as he discovered his name. While he would be compelled to admit it, he determined to treat Herbert with such a degree of coolness that he would take the hint and keep his distance.

When he arrived at the counting-room Herbert was already there and Mr. Pratt also.

"Good morning," said Herbert.

"Morning," muttered Tom.

"This is Thomas Stanton, your fellow-clerk," said Mr. Pratt. "I believe you have not been introduced."

"Now for it," thought Tom.

But rather to his surprise, Herbert made no demonstration but merely bowed slightly.

"What does it mean?" thought Tom, a little perplexed.

"I think you came from Ohio?" inquired Tom.

"Yes," said Herbert.

"Why didn't you stay there? Couldn't you make a living there?" asked Tom, not overpolitely.

"Probably I might," said Herbert, quietly.

"Then I think you should have stayed there."

"Which do you like best, the city or the country?"

"The city."

"So do I."

"But there's a difference. I have always lived in the city."

"I suppose boys often do come from the country to the city," said Herbert. "Was your father born in the city?"

"No," said Tom, glancing keenly at Herbert, to see if he meant anything by the question.

"Then it seems he preferred the city to the country."

Tom had his share of curiosity. He was therefore tempted to say, "I suppose you have no relations in the city?"

"What makes you think I haven't?" asked Herbert, looking at Tom rather peculiarly.

"I don't think anything about it. I only asked," said Tom, a little confused.

"Yes, I have an uncle in the city," said Herbert, quietly.

"Oh, indeed," said Tom.

He said nothing more for he felt that he might betray his knowledge of the relationship unintentionally. Herbert's manner left him as much in the dark as ever.

Mr. Pratt set Herbert at work writing and Tom also was soon busy. After a while Mr. Godfrey came in.

"Good morning, Herbert," he said, pleasantly, offering his hand. "So Mr. Pratt has set you to work, has he?"

"Yes, sir."

"I think we shall find enough for him to do, ch, Mr. Pratt?"

"Yes, sir, I think so," said the bookkeeper, who perceived that Herbert was in favor and it was as well to fall in with his employer.

"That's well. How do you like your boarding place, Herbert?"

"It isn't a very nice one, sir, but it is as good a one as I have a right to expect for the money I pay."

"Come round and dine with us to-night," said the merchant. "Mrs. Godfrey will be glad to see you. I'll give you my street and number."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert. "I shall be glad to accept your kind invitation."

Tom listened to this invitation with envy. Mr. Godfrey occupied a high social position. Moreover, he had a pretty daughter whom Tom had met at dancing school and he would have been very glad to receive the invitation which had been extended to "that beggar, Herbert," as he mentally styled him.

CHAPTER XXVII

AT THE CONCERT

HERBERT felt a little diffident about accepting his employer's invitation to dinner. He felt afraid that he should show his want of acquaintance with the etiquette of the dining table. But he had a better than ordinary education and possessed a fund of general information which enabled him to converse intelligently. Then his modest self-possession was of value to him.

Julia Godfrey, the merchant's only daughter, was a lively and animated girl, a year or two younger than Herbert. She had been the belle of the dancing school and Tom Stanton, among other boys, had always been proud to have her for a partner. She, however, had taken no particular fancy to Tom, whose evident satisfaction with himself naturally provoked criticisms.

Julia awaited the advent of her father's young guest with interest and her verdict was favorable. He was, to be sure, very plainly dressed, but his frank and open face did not need fine clothes to set it off.

"Weren't you frightened when you saw the robber?" she asked, for her father had told her of Herbert's adventure with the burglar.

"No," said Herbert, "I did not feel afraid."

"How brave you must be?" said Julia, with evident admiration.

"There was no need of my being frightened."

"I know I should have been frightened to death."

"You are a girl, you know," said Herbert. "I suppose it is natural to girls to be timid."

"I don't know but it is but I am sure it is not natural to all boys to be brave."

Herbert smiled.

"I was out in the country, one day, walking with Frank Percy," proceeded Julia, "when a big, ugly-looking dog met us. Frank, instead of standing by and defending me, ran away as fast as his feet could carry him. I laughed at him so much about it that he doesn't like to come near me since that."

"How did you escape?" asked Herbert, with interest.

"I saw that there was no use in running away, so I patted him on the head and called him 'Poor dog,' though I expected every minute he was going to bite me. That calmed him and he went off without doing any harm."

Herbert found Mrs. Godfrey to be a motherly-looking lady who received him kindly. He felt that he should like it if she was his aunt, instead of Mrs. Stanton.

"What do you think of Tom Stanton?" asked Julia. "Of course you know him—the other boy in pa's counting-room."

"I am not very well acquainted with him yet," said Herbert. "Do you know him?"

"Yes, he used to go to the same dancing school with me, last winter."

"Then you know him better than I do."

"I don't like him much," said Julia. "He's always thinking of himself and his neckties. Didn't you notice his necktie?"

"It was pretty large, I thought," said Herbert, smiling.

"Yes, he's fond of wearing large ones."

"I am afraid you are talking uncharitably, Julia," said her mother, mildly. "Girls, you know, are sometimes fond of dress."

Julia at first addressed our hero as Mr. Mason, until he requested her to call him Herbert, a request which she readily complied with.

"Young people," said Mr. Godfrey, after dinner, "there is to be an attractive concert at the Academy of Music this evening. I secured seats this morning for four. Suppose we all go?"

"I shall be delighted, for one, papa," said Julia. "You will like to go, Herbert, won't you?"

"Very much," said our hero.

"Then you can escort me, while papa and mamma walk together."

Herbert felt that this arrangement would be very agreeable, so far as he was concerned. It was, in fact, adopted, and the four paired off together.

Entering the hall, they followed the usher to their seats, which were eligibly located only a few rows back from the stage.

Just behind them sat a party among whom the new arrivals produced quite a sensation. They consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, Tom and Maria. There was but slight acquaintance between the two families, as Mr. Godfrey's stood higher, socially, than Mr. Stanton's.

"Why, there's Mr. Godfrey and his family, Tom," said Maria, turning toward her brother. "Who's that boy with them? Julia hasn't got any brother, has she?"

Tom had watched the entrance of the party with lively dissatisfaction. That his beggarly cousin should appear in public on such intimate terms with Julia Godfrey, to whom he himself had paid attention, but without any encouragement, struck him as particularly mortifying.

"Mr. Godfrey's son!" he said, disdainfully. "That boy is Herbert Mason."

"Our cousin?" asked Maria, with interest. "Ma, did you hear?" she whispered, eagerly. "That boy in front of us is Cousin Herbert."

"That boy with the Godfreys?" said Mrs. Stanton.

"Yes, he's talking with Julia now."

"Are you sure? Who told you?"

"Tom."

"Is it true, Tom?"

"Yes," said Tom, frowning.

"What could have induced the Godfreys to bring him along?" said Mrs. Stanton who was no better pleased than Tom at the social success of the poor relation.

"He's quite good-looking," said Maria.

"Nonsense," said her mother, sharply. "He has a very countrified look."

The news was communicated to Mr. Stanton who looked with interest at his sister's son. He fervently wished him back again in Ohio. Here in New York, it would be difficult to avoid taking some notice of him. But so far as pecuniary assistance was concerned, Mr. Stanton determined that he would give none, unless it was forced upon him. Had he known our hero better he would have been less alarmed.

With all his prejudices, Mr. Stanton could not help confessing that Herbert was a boy of whom any uncle might be proud. Though plainly dressed, he did not seem out of place surrounded by well-dressed people.

"There's Tom Stanton just behind you, with his father and mother and sister," whispered Julia.

Herbert turned his head slightly. He was desirous of seeing what his uncle and aunt were like. His uncle met his gaze and turned uncomfortably away, appearing not to know him, yet conscious that in his affected ignorance he was acting shabbily. Mrs. Stanton bent a cold gaze of scrutiny upon the unwelcome nephew. Tom looked super-

cilious and elevated his pug nose a trifle. Maria, only, looked as if she would like to know her cousin.

It was only a hasty glance of Herbert's but it made him decide that he would not claim relationship.

Tom fidgeted in his seat, watching with ill-concealed vexation the confidential conversation which appeared to be going on between Julia and his cousin.

"What she can see in that boor, I can't imagine," he said to himself.

Moreover, though Julia had looked around, she had not deigned any recognition of himself and this hurt his pride. He determined to overlook the neglect and address her.

"Good evening, Miss Julia," he said, familiarly, bending forward.

"Oh, good evening, Mr. Stanton," said Julia coldly, turning slightly. "Herbert, isn't that a beautiful song?"

"She calls him Herbert," said Tom, in scornful disgust. "I wonder if she knows he is a beggar."

"How are you enjoying the concert, Miss Julia?" he continued, resolved not to take the rebuff.

"Very well," said Julia. "By the way," she continued, "I believe you are acquainted with Mr. Mason."

Herbert, upon this, bowed pleasantly but Tom said, in rather a disagreeable tone, "I know Mr. Mason slightly."

"Oh," said Julia, arching her eyebrows, "I thought you were both in papa's counting-room."

"We shall know each other better by and by," said Herbert, smiling.

Tom did not appear to hear this but tried to keep up the conversation with Julia. But the young lady gave brief replies, and finally, turning away, devoted herself once more to Herbert, much to Tom's disgust. In fact, what he saw made Tom pass a very unpleasant evening, and when, on their return home, Maria suggested that Julia had taken a fancy to Herbert, he told her to mind her own business.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PETER GREENLEAF AGAIN

NOTWITHSTANDING he was receiving a salary larger than is usually paid to boys of his age, Herbert felt cramped for the want of money. Six dollars a week would have paid his expenses comfortably if he had been well provided to begin with. But all the clothing he had, besides what he wore, he had brought with him in a small bundle, the greater part having been left with his trunk at the house of Abner Holden who quietly confiscated the trunk and its contents; and this, to some extent, consoled him for the departure of the owner.

Herbert found himself sadly in need of underclothing; his only suit, from constant wear, was likely to deteriorate rapidly. He saved all the money he could from his weekly wages toward purchasing a new one but his savings were inconsiderable.

"If I only had that money Greenleaf stole from me, I should be all right," he said to himself. "I don't see how I can save up more than two dollars a week out of my wages and it will take a long time for that to amount to much."

There certainly did not appear to be much chance of saving more. His boarding place was as cheap as he could obtain and our hero felt that Mrs. Morgan's was as poor as he should be able to endure.

He was rather mortified, too, at the poverty of his wardrobe. Mrs. Morgan asked him one day, "When is your trunk coming?" and Herbert was obliged to own, with some shame, that he had none.

"I suppose I shall have to wait till my wages are raised," thought Herbert, with a little sigh. This, he re-

flected, would not be very soon, as he had started with a salary greater than he was likely to earn, as Mr. Godfrey had said.

But relief was nearer than he anticipated.

One day as he was walking up the Bowery, he saw in front of him a figure which he well remembered. It was Peter Greenleaf.

Herbert's heart beat quick with excitement, mingled with pleasure. He felt a natural indignation against this young man who had cheated him so remorselessly and left him alone and almost penniless in a strange city.

What should he do?

Closely behind him was a policeman slowly pacing his regular round. Herbert went up to him and, pointing to Greenleaf, rapidly recounted his grievances.

"It was a mean trick," said the policeman, who was a favorable specimen of his class. "Is this the first time you have seen him?"

"Yes."

"Tell me what you want to do."

"I want to get my money back."

"Probably he's spent it. How long since he robbed you?"

"Three weeks."

"Not much chance, then. Probably his pocket's empty unless he's fleeced somebody else in the meantime. However, it's as well to see what can be done. Now I'll tell you how to act. Go up to him boldly and demand your money. If he bluffs you off, call me."

"All right," said Herbert.

He hastened and tapped Greenleaf on the shoulder.

Greenleaf turned. When he recognized Herbert he looked surprised and disconcerted. But he had plenty of assurance and quickly determined upon his course.

Assuming a stolid look, he said: "Well, my lad, who are you; and what do you want?"

"You know who I am, well enough," said Herbert, angrily.

"Do I? Then I'm uncommonly forgetful. I haven't any recollection of your interesting countenance."

"I suppose you don't want to remember me, Mr. Greenleaf," said Herbert.

"Greenleaf! You're thinking of somebody else. My name's Thompson."

"Your name was Greenleaf when you stopped with me at French's Hotel," said Herbert, sturdily.

"You're crazy, I fancy," said Greenleaf. "I never stopped at the hotel you mention, in my life."

"Where's the money you took from me?"

"What are you talking about?" said Greenleaf.

"You went off before I was awake with more than fifty dollars of mine."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said Greenleaf, drawing himself up. "I've a great mind to knock you over."

"Mr. Greenleaf," said Herbert, firmly, "either return my money or I will call a policeman."

"Just what I shall do myself, unless you stop this nonsense," said Greenleaf, angrily.

"Once more, will you give up that money?"

"Stand out of the way," said Greenleaf, "if you know what is best for yourself."

He was about to push by, thrusting Herbert roughly out of the way, when our hero turned and his look summoned the policeman, who hastened to the spot.

"Give this boy his money," he said, authoritatively. "I know all about your little game. It's up now. Unless you hand over your plunder you must go with me."

Greenleaf changed color and was evidently alarmed.

"I've got nobody's money except my own," he said.

"Come along, then," said the officer, taking him by the arm.

"Stop a minute," said he, hurriedly, finding that mat-

ters had come to a crisis. "If I give up what I have will you let me go?"

"Well, that depends on how much you have."

"I've got twenty dollars."

Herbert was about to say that this would do but the policeman shook his head.

"Won't do," said he. "Come along."

After a little haggling Greenleaf produced forty dollars, which Herbert pocketed with much satisfaction.

"Now go along and mind you don't try any more such games."

Greenleaf needed no second permission to be gone.

"Thank you," said Herbert, gratefully. "I needed the money badly. I shouldn't have recovered it but for you."

"Take better care of it next time," said the officer, not unkindly. "Take care not to trust a stranger too easily. Better take my advice and put it in a savings bank."

"I shall be obliged to use most of it," said Herbert. "What I don't need I will put in the bank."

The recovery of so much of his lost money seemed to Herbert a windfall. For five dollars he purchased a good, durable trunk which he ordered sent home to his lodgings. Fifteen dollars more he invested in necessary underclothing and this left him one-half of the money for future use. Besides this he had six dollars which in three weeks he had saved from his wages. He returned to the counting-room in unusually good spirits. He had other reasons for encouragement. He was getting accustomed to his duties. Mr. Godfrey always treated him kindly and had called upon him again that very morning to assist him in translating a French letter, complimenting him at the same time upon his scholarship.

"I'll do my best," thought Herbert. "'Try and Trust,' that's my motto. I think it will bring me success."

But even while he spoke, an unforeseen danger menaced him.

CHAPTER XXIX

SPARRING

AFTER the concert, Tom Stanton took even a greater dislike to his cousin than before. To say that he was in love with Julia Godfrey would be rather ridiculous, considering his youth. But Julia had been a belle among the children of her own age at the dancing school, and there was considerable rivalry among the boys—or I should perhaps say young gentlemen—for the honor of her notice. Tom desired it, because it would give him a kind of distinction among his fellows. So, though he was not in love with Julia, he was jealous when she showed favor to anyone else. But this feeling was mild compared with that he experienced when Julia bestowed her notice upon his penniless cousin.

"I can't understand how girls can be such fools," thought Tom, as that evening, after returning from the concert, he surveyed his rather perturbed face in the mirror surmounting his bureau. "I wouldn't have believed Julia Godfrey would stoop to notice such a pauper."

Then a cheerful thought came to him. Perhaps she was only trying to rouse his jealousy.

Certainly to an unprejudiced observer such a thought would never have suggested itself. The cool indifference with which Julia had treated Tom did not appear to argue any such feeling as would lead to the attempt to arouse his jealousy.

When he arrived at the counting-room the next morning, he found Herbert already there. Indeed, our hero was very particular to be punctual in his attendance, while Tom was generally at least a quarter of an hour behind time.

"I saw you at the concert last evening, Mason," said Tom, who wanted to get a chance to say something disagreeable.

"Yes, I was there," said Herbert. "You sat in the row just behind us."

"Yes. I suppose you were never at a concert before."

"Not in New York."

"Mr. Godfrey was very kind to take you."

That was what Herbert thought himself. But as Tom expressed it, there was something in his tone which implied a conviction of Herbert's social inferiority, which our hero did not like.

"I have found Mr. Godfrey very kind," he said, briefly.

"There are not many employers who would invite a boy in your position to a concert with his family," said Tom.

"I believe my position is the same as yours."

"I don't see it," said Tom, haughtily.

"I believe we are both in Mr. Godfrey's employ."

"Oh, yes, so far as that goes. But I am the son of a rich man," said Tom, pompously.

"I don't see that that makes any difference," said Herbert.

"Don't you? Well, I do."

"We are both boys in Mr. Godfrey's employ."

"That's true, but then he took you out of pity."

Tom's tone as he said this was very aggravating and Herbert's face flushed.

"I don't know anything of the sort," he retorted.

"No, I suppose you don't consider it in that light," said Tom, carelessly; "but, of course, it's clear enough to others. Where would you have been if Mr. Godfrey hadn't given you a place? Blacking boots, probably, among the street ragamuffins."

"Perhaps I might," said Herbert, quietly, "if I couldn't have got anything better to do."

"It's a very genteel occupation," sneered Tom.

"I don't think it is," said Herbert, "but it's an honest one."

"You may have to take to it yet."

"Perhaps so. So may you."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded Tom.

"I only said to you the same thing you said to me."

"You seem to forget that our circumstances are very different," said Tom.

"They are just now, so far as money goes. I get a larger salary than you."

Tom was very much incensed at this remark.

"I didn't mean that," said he. "Of course, if Mr. Godfrey chooses to give away money in charity it is none of my business. I don't need any charity."

"Mr. Godfrey pays me for my services," said Herbert.

"You seemed to be very intimate with Julia Godfrey last evening," said Tom, unpleasantly.

"I found her very pleasant."

"Yes, she was very kind to take notice of you."

"I suppose the notice you have taken of me this morning is meant in kindness," said Herbert.

"Yes, of course, being in the same counting-room, I think it right to take some notice of you," said Tom.

"I am very much obliged to you."

"But there's one piece of advice I should like to give you," proceeded Tom.

"What is that?" inquired Herbert.

"Don't feel too much set up by Julia Godfrey's notice. She only took notice of you out of pity, and to encourage you. If you had been in her own position in society——"

"Like you, for instance."

"Yes, like me," said Tom, complacently, "she would have been more ceremonious. I thought I would just mention it, or you might not understand it."

It was only natural that Herbert should be provoked by this elaborate humiliation suggested by Tom.

"I suppose that is the reason she took so little notice of you," he said.

Tom was nettled at this statement of a fact but he answered in an offhand manner:

"Oh, Julia and I are old friends. I've danced with her frequently at dancing school."

"I am much obliged to you for your information," said Herbert, "though I am rather surprised that you should take so great an interest in my affairs."

"Oh, you're new in the city and I know all the ropes," said Tom. "I thought I might as well give you a friendly hint."

"I am lucky in having such a friend," said Herbert, "and will take the advice as it was given."

Here the bookkeeper entered and soon after Mr. Godfrey made his appearance.

"I hope you had a pleasant evening, Herbert," he said.

"Very pleasant, sir, thank you," said Herbert.

"I believe I saw you, also, at the concert, Thomas," said Mr. Godfrey.

"Yes, sir," said Tom. "I am very fond of music, and attend all the first class musical entertainments."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Godfrey.

"My daughter insists that I shall invite you to the house again soon," said Mr. Godfrey, again addressing Herbert.

"I am very much obliged to her, and to you, sir," said Herbert, modestly. "I shall be very glad to come."

Tom's face darkened as he heard this. He would have given considerable to receive such an invitation himself.

"Mr. Godfrey must be infatuated," he said to himself, impatiently, "to invite such a beggar to his house."

"I wonder why Tom dislikes me so much?" thought Herbert. "He certainly takes pains enough to show his feeling. Would it be different, I wonder, if he knew that I was his cousin?"

Herbert thought of mentioning to Mr. Godfrey that he had recovered three-quarters of the money of which he had been robbed. It would have been well if he had done so but Mr. Godfrey seemed particularly engaged and he thought it best not to interrupt him.

CHAPTER XXX

AN UNEXPECTED BLOW

HERBERT felt happier than usual. He had recovered the greater part of his money and thus was relieved from various inconveniences which had resulted from his straitened circumstances. Then he had a good place and a salary sufficient to defray his modest expenses and the prospect of promotion if he should be faithful to the interests of his employer, as he firmly intended to be. It was agreeable also to reflect that he was in favor with Mr. Godfrey, who had thus far treated him with as much kindness as if he had been his own son.

There was, to be sure, the drawback of Tom's enmity but as there was no good reason for this he would not allow it to trouble him much. He determined to take an early opportunity to write to his good friend, Dr. Kent, an account of his present position. He would have done so before but had hesitated from the fear that in some way the intelligence would reach Abner Holden.

Meanwhile a painful experience awaited him, for which he was not in the least prepared.

About one o'clock a gentleman entered the counting-room hastily and said, "Mr. Godfrey, I wonder whether I happened to leave my pocketbook anywhere about your office when I was here an hour ago?"

"I don't think so. When did you miss it?"

"A few minutes since. I went to a restaurant to get lunch, felt for my pocketbook and found it gone."

"Was there much in it?"

"No sum of any consequence. Between twenty and thirty dollars, I believe. There were, however, some papers of value, which I shall be sorry to lose."

"I hardly think you could have left it here. However, I will inquire. Mr. Pratt, have you seen anything of Mr. Walton's pocketbook?"

"No, sir," said the bookkeeper, promptly.

"Herbert, have you seen it?"

"No, sir," said our hero.

"Thomas?"

Tom Stanton was assailed by a sudden and dangerous temptation. His dislike for Herbert had been increased in various ways and especially had been rendered more intense by the independent tone assumed by our hero in the conversation that very morning. Now here was an opportunity of getting him into disgrace and probably cause him to lose his situation.

He hesitated when the question was asked him and thus, as he expected, fixed Mr. Godfrey's attention.

"Why don't you answer, Thomas?" he said in surprise.

"I don't like to," said Tom, artfully.

"Why not?" demanded his employer, suspiciously.

"Because I don't want to get anybody into trouble."

"Speak out what you mean."

"If you insist upon it," said Tom, with pretended reluctance, "I suppose I must obey you."

"Of course, if any wrong has been done, it is your duty to expose it."

"Then, sir," said Tom, "I saw Mason pick up a wallet from the floor and put it in his pocket just after the gentleman went out. He did it so quickly that no one probably observed it but myself."

Herbert listened to this accusation as if stunned. It

was utterly beyond his conception how any one could be guilty of such a deliberate falsehood. So he remained silent and this operated against him.

"Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, unwilling to believe our hero guilty of intentional dishonesty, "you should have mentioned having found the pocketbook."

"So I would, sir," said Herbert, having found his voice at last, "if I had found one."

"Do you mean to say that you have not?" demanded Mr. Godfrey, with a searching look.

"Yes, sir," said Herbert, firmly.

"What, then, does Thomas mean when he asserts that he saw you do so?"

"I don't know, sir. I think he means to injure me, as I have noticed ever since I entered the office that he seems to dislike me."

"How is that, Thomas? Do you again declare that you saw Herbert pick up the wallet?"

"I do," said Tom, boldly. "Of course, I expected that he would deny it. I leave it to you, sir, if he does not show his guilt in his face?"

Herbert's indignation had brought a flush to his face and he did look as a guilty person is supposed to. Mr. Godfrey observed this and his heart sank; for, unable to conceive of such wickedness as Tom's, he saw no other way except to believe in Herbert's guilt.

"Have you nothing to say, Herbert?" he asked, more in sorrow than in anger.

"No, sir," said Herbert, in a low voice. "Tom has uttered a wicked falsehood and he knows it."

"Of course, I expected you would say that," said Tom.

"This is a serious charge, Herbert," proceeded Mr. Godfrey. "I shall have to ask you to produce whatever you have in your pockets."

"Certainly, sir," said our hero, calmly.

But as he spoke it flashed upon him that he had in his

pocket twenty-six dollars. He could, indeed, explain where he got it; but would his explanation be believed? So it was with a sinking heart that he drew out his own pocket-book.

"Is that yours?" asked Mr. Godfrey, turning to Mr. Walton.

"No, it is not, but he may have transferred my money to it."

Upon this hint, Mr. Godfrey opened the pocket-book and drew out the bills, which he proceeded to count.

"Twenty-six dollars," he said. "How much did you lose?"

"Between twenty and thirty dollars."

"Here are two tens and three twos."

"I had two tens. I don't remember the denomination of the other bills."

Even Tom was struck with astonishment at this discovery. He knew that his charge was groundless, yet here it was substantiated in a very remarkable manner.

"Herbert," said his employer, sorrowfully, "this discovery gives me more pain than I can express. I had a very high idea of you. I could not have believed you capable of so mean a thing as deliberate dishonesty."

"I am not guilty," said Herbert, proudly.

"How can you say this in the face of all this evidence? Do you mean to say that this money is yours?"

"I do," said Herbert, firmly.

"Where could you have got it?" said his employer, incredulously. "Did you not tell me when you entered my employ that you were almost penniless?"

"Yes, sir, you are right."

"What explanation, then, can you offer? Your case looks bad."

"The six dollars I saved from my wages at the rate of two dollars a week. The twenty dollars is a part of

the money I was robbed of. I succeeded in recovering forty dollars of it yesterday."

Here Herbert related the circumstances already known to the reader.

"A likely story," said Tom, scornfully.

"Be silent, Thomas," said Mr. Godfrey. "Your story does not seem probable," he added to Herbert.

"It is true, sir," said our hero, firmly.

"What could he have done with your wallet, however?"

"He has been out to the post office since," said Tom.

"He might have thrown it away."

This, unfortunately for Herbert, was true. He had been out and could have disposed of the wallet.

"I don't know what to think, Mr. Walton," said Mr. Godfrey. "I'm afraid the boy's guilty."

"I am afraid so. I don't care so much for the money, if he will give me back the papers."

"I can't do it, sir, for I never had them."

"What shall we do?"

"The other boy declares that he saw this one take the wallet from the floor, where I probably dropped it."

"Once more, Herbert, will you confess?" asked Mr. Godfrey.

"I can only say, sir, that I am innocent."

"Mr. Walton, what shall we do?"

"Let the boy go. I will leave it to his honor to return me the papers, and he may keep the money. I think he will make up his mind to do so by to-morrow."

"You hear, Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey. "While this remains in doubt you cannot retain your situation."

"Thank you, Mr. Walton, for your indulgence," said Herbert; "but I am sorry you think me guilty. The truth will some time appear. I shall *try* to do my duty, and *trust* to God to clear me."

He took his hat and left the counting-room with a heavy heart, feeling himself in disgrace.

“I had great confidence in that boy, Walton,” said Mr. Godfrey. “Even now I can hardly believe him guilty.”

CHAPTER XXXI

MR. STANTON IS SURPRISED

WHILE these events were taking place a different scene occurred at the office of Mr. Stanton.

He had just finished reading the morning paper and his thoughts turned to the nephew whose persistent failure to claim relationship puzzled him not a little. He was glad not to be called upon for money; still he felt a little annoyed at Herbert's reticence, especially as it left him unable to decide whether our hero knew of the tie which connected them.

While he was thinking over this subject one of his clerks entered the office.

“A gentleman to see you, Mr. Stanton.”

Mr. Stanton's glance rested on a tall, vigorous man of perhaps thirty-five years of age who closely followed the clerk.

Mr. Stanton's visitor was Ralph the Ranger, who had assisted Herbert to escape from Abner Holden.

Mr. Stanton gazed at the stranger with some curiosity but was unable to recognize him.

“Have you business with me?” he asked.

“Yes,” said the visitor, in a voice whose depth carried with it an assurance of strength.

“State it, then, as briefly as possible,” said the merchant, with a little asperity, for there was not as much deference in the manner of the other as he thought there should have been. Like most new men, he was jealous of

his position and solicitous lest he should not be treated with due respect.

"I will do so," said the stranger, "but as it cannot be summed up in a sentence, I will take the liberty of seating myself."

He sat down not far from Mr. Stanton.

"My time is valuable," said the merchant, coldly. "I cannot listen to a long story."

As the visitor was plainly, if not roughly, dressed, he suspected that he desired pecuniary assistance. Had such been the case there was very little prospect of help from Mr. Stanton and that gentleman already enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure of refusing him.

"Don't you know me?" demanded Ralph, abruptly.

Mr. Stanton did not anticipate such a commencement.

"No," he said, "I never saw you before."

Ralph smiled a little bitterly.

"So I have passed entirely out of your remembrance," he said. "Well, it is twelve years since we met."

"Twelve years," repeated Mr. Stanton. He scanned the stranger's face with curiosity but not a glimmer of recollection came to him.

"I dare say I met many persons at that distance of time whom I cannot remember now even by name."

"I think you will remember my name," said Ralph, quietly. "Your memory of Ralph Pendleton cannot be wholly obliterated."

Mr. Stanton started.

"Are you Ralph Pendleton?"

"Yes, but not the Ralph Pendleton you once knew. Then I was an inexperienced boy; now I am a man."

"Yes, you have changed considerably," said Mr. Stanton, uncomfortably. "Where have you kept yourself all these years? Why have you not made yourself known before?"

"Before I answer these questions I must refer to some

circumstances well known to both of us. You were my father's friend. At least he so considered you."

"I was so."

"When he died, he left you my guardian."

"Yes."

"I was in rather an idle frame of mind and being possessed, as I supposed, of fifty thousand dollars, I felt no necessity impelling me to work. When I was of age I took a fancy to travel and left my property in your hands with full power to manage it for me."

"Well, this is an old story."

"An old one, but it shall not be a long one. My income being sufficient to defray my expenses abroad, I traveled leisurely with no thought for the future. In your integrity I had the utmost confidence. Imagine then my dismay, when, while resident in Paris, I received a letter from you stating that owing to a series of unlucky investments, nearly all my money had been sunk and in place of fifty thousand dollars my property was reduced to a few hundreds."

"It was unlucky, I admit," said Mr. Stanton, moving uneasily in his chair. "But the best and most judicious cannot always foresee how an investment will turn out. Besides, I lost largely myself."

"So you wrote me," said Ralph, quietly. "However, that did not make it any the easier for me to bear."

"Perhaps not, but it shows, at any rate, that I took the same risk for my own money that I did for others."

Ralph proceeded without noticing this remark. "What made matters worse for me was that I had fallen in love with a young American lady who, with her parents, was then traveling in Europe. I was accepted by the young lady. When, however, I learned of my loss of fortune I at once made it known. Her father told me that under the altered circumstances the engagement must be considered broken. Still he held out the prospect that should

I ever again obtain a property as large as that I had lost, I might marry his daughter. She, on her part, promised to wait for me."

"Well?"

"I came to New York, received from you the remnant of my fortune and sailed the next week for California, then just open to American enterprise. Having a strong motive for acquiring money, it is not surprising that I should have been dazzled with the rest and persuaded to make the journey to the land of gold."

"A Quixotic scheme, as I thought at the time," said Mr. Stanton, coldly. "For one that succeeded there were fifty who failed. You had better have taken the clerkship I offered you."

"You are wrong," said Ralph. "There were many who were disappointed but I was not among the number."

"Did you succeed?" asked Mr. Stanton, surprised.

"So well, that at the end of two years' residence I found myself as rich as I had ever been."

"Had you made fifty thousand dollars?" demanded the merchant, in amazement.

"I had."

"Why did you not let me know of your success?"

"When I once more found myself possessed of a fortune I took the next vessel home. I had but one thought and that was to claim the hand of my promised bride."

"Well?"

"I found her married," said Ralph, bitterly. "She had forgotten her promise or had been overpersuaded by her parents—I do not know which—and had proved false."

"That was unfortunate. But do you still possess the money?"

"I do."

"Indeed! I congratulate you," said Mr. Stanton, with suavity; and he held out his hand, which Ralph did not

appear to see. Ralph Pendleton rich was a very different person from Ralph Pendleton poor.

"Proceed with your story," he said; "I am quite interested in it."

CHAPTER XXXII

RISEN FROM THE DEAD

RALPH PENDLETON proceeded.

"This blow overwhelmed me. All that I had been laboring for seemed suddenly snatched from me."

"You had your money," suggested Mr. Stanton.

"Yes; but for money itself I cared little."

Mr. Stanton shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"I valued money only as means to an end, and that end was to make Margaret Lindsay my wife. She failed me and my money lost its charm."

"There were plenty who could have consoled you."

"No doubt I might have been successful in other quarters but I did not care to try. I left New York in disgust and going West, I buried myself in the forest."

"What did you do with your money all this while?"

"I left it in the hands of men whom I could trust. It has been accumulating all these years and the fifty thousand dollars have swelled to ninety thousand."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Mr. Stanton. "And now you have come here to enjoy it, I suppose?"

"A different motive has led to my coming—a motive connected with you," said Ralph.

"Connected with me!" repeated the merchant, uneasily.

"Yes."

"May I ask in what manner?"

"I expected the question and am come to answer it. When I returned from Europe impoverished you gave me

a brief statement of the manner in which you had invested my fortune and showed me how it had melted away like snow before the sun."

"You remember rightly. I bought on your account shares in Lake Superior Mining Company, which promised excellently. But it proved to be under the management of knaves, and ran quickly down from par to two per cent, at which price I thought best to sell out."

"This is according to the statement you made me."

"I am sure," said Mr. Stanton, "that no one regretted more than I the disastrous result. Indeed, I had reason, for I myself suffered considerable loss."

"I am aware now that you were concerned in the matter," said Ralph, significantly.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Stanton, quickly.

"I will tell you. You were right in denouncing the management as knavish. The company was got up by knaves on a basis of fraud and was intended as a trap for the unwary. But there is one important circumstance which you have neglected to mention."

"What is that?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"I mean this," said Ralph, firmly, "that you yourself were the prime originator of the company—that you engineered it through to the end—that you invested my money with the express intention of converting it to your own profit. I charge you with this, that all, or nearly all the property I lost, went into your pocket."

The color went and came in Mr. Stanton's face. He seemed staggered by this sudden and unexpected accusation and did not at first make reply.

Feeling forced to speak at last, he said, "This is very strange language, Mr. Pendleton."

"It is unexpected, no doubt, for after all these years you probably thought it would remain forever unknown; but in what respect is it strange? I have given you a statement of facts as directly as I could."

"They are not facts. Your charge is wholly false."

"I wish I could believe it," said Ralph. "I wish I could believe that I was not deliberately swindled by one who professed to be my father's friend."

"On what authority do you bring this monstrous charge?" demanded Mr. Stanton, more boldly. "How happens it that you have not made it before?"

"For the reason that I did not suspect any fraud."

"Well, I admit that, as it turned out, the investment was injudicious. Everything else I deny."

"Your denial is vain."

"You cannot prove the truth of what you say."

"So you fall back on that? But you are mistaken. I can prove the truth of what I say," said Ralph, firmly.

"How?"

"Do you remember a man named David Marston?"

"He is dead," said Mr. Stanton, hastily.

"So you have supposed," said Ralph; "but you were deceived. He is not dead. I only encountered him a week since, quite by accident, in my Western home. He was your confidential clerk. From him I learned how basely I had been deceived and with what deliberate cruelty you conspired to rob the son of your dead friend."

"I don't believe David Marston is alive," said Mr. Stanton, hoarsely, with a certain terror in his face. "Indeed, I have proof that he is dead."

"I know the character of your proof. A paper was forwarded to you from Australia, whither you had sent him, containing the record of his death."

"Yes? What have you to say against this?"

"That the publication was a mistake. He was dangerously sick and it was falsely announced that he was dead."

"I believe it now," said Mr. Stanton, doggedly. "Why should I not?"

"If you wish to be convinced, wait a moment."

Ralph Pendleton rose and left the counting-room. He

returned with an elderly man, thin of face and wasted in figure, looking twenty years older than Mr. Stanton, though really of about the same age.

"This is David Marston," said Ralph—"the living proof that I have told you the truth."

Mr. Stanton gazed at him wildly, for to him it was as the face of one risen from the dead.

"How do you do, Mr. Stanton?" said David Marston, humbly. "It is many years since we met."

"Are you really David Marston?" demanded Mr. Stanton, never taking his eyes off the shrunken figure of his old clerk.

"I am, sir; greatly changed indeed, but still the David Marston who was formerly in your employ. I've been unlucky and aged fast."

"I am afraid your mind is also affected. You have been telling strange stories to Mr. Pendleton here."

"True stories, sir," said David, firmly.

"Come, come, how much is he going to give you for this evidence of yours?"

"Stop, Mr. Stanton! You insult us both," said Ralph Pendleton, sternly. "I am not the man to buy false evidence, nor is David Marston the man to perjure himself for pay. David, I want you, in Mr. Stanton's presence, to make a clear statement of his connection with the mining company by which I lost my fortune."

David Marston obeyed and in as few words as possible unfolded the story. It fully substantiated the charge which Ralph had brought against his early guardian.

When he had finished, Ralph said, "You can judge what weight Marston's testimony would have before a court of justice and whether it would help your commercial standing to have his story made public."

"What is it you want of me?" said Mr. Stanton.

"I want restitution, dollar for dollar, of my lost money. I will waive interest, though I might justly claim it. But

were it all paid, the wrong would not be redressed. You cannot restore to me the bride who would have been mine but for your villainy."

"How much time will you give me to pay this money?"

"Ten days."

"It is a short time."

"It must suffice. Do you agree?"

"I must."

"Bind yourself to that and for ten days I leave you free."

Satisfactory security was given that the engagement would be met and Ralph left the counting-room.

"I am rich," he said to himself; "but of what avail is it? Whom can I benefit with my wealth?"

This thought had scarcely crossed his mind when he came face to face with Herbert, walking with a sad and downcast face in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A FRIEND IN NEED

HERBERT had left Mr. Godfrey's counting-room very much depressed. But an hour before he had rejoiced in his excellent prospects. Now all was changed. He was dismissed from his situation in disgrace, suspected of a mean theft. He had, to be sure, the consciousness of innocence and that was a great deal. Still his prospects were dark. How could he hope to obtain another place without a recommendation from his late employer? No; he must resign all hope of a position and adopt some street occupation, such as selling papers. He did not doubt but that in some such way he could get a living, but still he would be under suspicion and that was hard to bear.

He walked down Broadway, with his eyes fixed upon the sidewalk. All at once he started to hear his name called and, looking up, to his unbounded astonishment he saw before him Ralph the Ranger, whom he had supposed a thousand miles away in his cabin in the Ohio woods.

"Ralph!" he exclaimed, seizing the Ranger's hand. "How did you come here? When did you arrive? You are the last person I expected to see."

"And you are the one I most wanted to see."

"I can say the same, Ralph," said Herbert, soberly, "for I am in trouble."

"In trouble, boy? I am sorry for that. Is it money? I can get you out of that trouble."

"It is not that exactly, Ralph. If you will come into City Hall Park I will tell you all about it."

"Instead of that, let us go into the Astor House," said Ralph. "It is where I am stopping."

"You are stopping at the Astor House?" said Herbert, in momentary surprise. "Perhaps you do not know that there are cheaper hotels. Shall I direct you to one?"

"No, Herbert, I am not poor, as you perhaps think. I suppose I should be called rich; but that I can explain afterwards. For the present your affairs require attention. Come in."

They went up the steps of the Astor House and Ralph led the way to his room.

"Now, Herbert, take a chair and tell me all," he said.

Ralph listened with attention and when it was concluded he said: "The main thing is to account for the money in your possession. Do you think you could remember the policeman who aided you in recovering it?"

"I am sure I should."

"Did he know how much money you recovered?"

"Yes, for he saw me count the bills."

"Then we must seek him and induce him to go with us to Mr. Godfrey and give his testimony."

"I never thought of that," said Herbert, his face brightening. "When shall we go?"

"Now. I have nothing else to occupy me and the sooner you are righted the better."

They went at once to the spot where Herbert had encountered Greenleaf and had to wait but a brief time when the policeman came up.

"Do you remember me?" asked Herbert, going up to him.

"Yes," he replied; "you are the boy that overhauled a thief the other day and got back his money."

"You see he remembers," said Herbert.

"My friend," said Ralph, "when will you be off duty?"

"In half an hour," said the policeman in surprise.

"In half an hour, then, I want you to go with me to this boy's employer and repeat your story. The possession of the money has caused him to be suspected, and your evidence, confirming his own, will clear him."

"I will go," said the officer, "and shall be glad to get him out of a scrape. It was all fair and aboveboard and I'll say so cheerfully."

At the end of the half hour the three made their way to Mr. Godfrey's place of business and entered together.

Mr. Godfrey marked their entrance with surprise and looked inquiringly at Herbert.

"Mr. Godfrey," said Herbert, respectfully, "I have come to prove to you that the money I have in my pocket-book is my own."

"I shall be very glad if you can do so," said Mr. Godfrey; and it was evident that he spoke sincerely.

"This officer knows all the circumstances and will tell you what he knows."

The policeman made his statement, partly in answer to questions from Mr. Godfrey.

"The explanation is satisfactory," said Mr. Godfrey, "and convinces me. It does not, however, absolutely clear

you, since between the time of the money being lost and your being searched you went out to the post office and might have disposed of the pocketbook and its contents on the way."

Herbert's countenance fell, but Mr. Godfrey hastened to add, "Although your vindication is not complete, I will say that I believe you fully and will receive you back into my employ."

"You have forgotten one thing, sir," said Herbert. "Thomas declares that he saw me pick up the wallet and put it in my pocket."

"So I did," said Tom, boldly.

Mr. Godfrey looked perplexed and was hesitating what to say when Mr. Walton, the owner of the lost pocket-book, hurriedly entered.

"Mr. Godfrey," he said, "I have to beg your pardon and most of all the pardon of this boy," indicating Herbert. "I have found my pocketbook. I didn't lose it here but my pocket was picked in the street. The pick-pocket was arrested and the wallet has been returned to me. This boy is innocent."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Godfrey, with emphasis. "Herbert, I will try to make amends to you for my transient suspicions of your honesty. As for you," turning to Thomas and speaking sternly, "I despise you for your mean attempt to injure your fellow-clerk. You must leave my employment to-day. I shall write to your father the reasons for dismissing you."

"I can get along without your paltry four dollars a week," said Tom, with bravado. "I am not a beggar."

"You may be something worse if you do not amend," said Mr. Godfrey. "Mr. Pratt, you may pay him for the entire week and he can go at once."

"Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, "you can come back at once and I will raise your pay to eight dollars a week. I will never again doubt your integrity."

"Thank you, sir," said Herbert; "I shall be glad to come back."

"Before this matter is decided," said Ralph, "I have a proposition to make to Herbert. I am rich and have no one to share or inherit my wealth. I propose to adopt him—to give him an opportunity to complete his education in Europe. If some years hence you shall be willing to receive him, he can then enter your counting-room to learn business."

Herbert stared at Ralph in amazement.

"Do you mean that I am to go to Europe with you, Ralph?" he said.

"Yes, if you like."

"I shall like it *very much*," said Herbert, enthusiastically. "How can I thank you for so much kindness!"

"Your companionship will cheer me and give me something to live for, Herbert," said Ralph. "Through you I hope some day to enjoy life again."

"I congratulate you, Herbert," said Mr. Godfrey, kindly, "though I am sorry to lose you. Whenever your guardian is ready to have you enter on a business career, a place in my counting-room shall be open to you."

"Ralph," said Herbert, seriously, as they went from the counting-room in company, "all that has happened seems so wonderful that I am a little afraid I shall wake up to find all a dream."

"It is a change to me also," said Ralph, "to have a new interest in life. The past is a sealed book. Let us look forward to a bright and pleasant future."

CHAPTER XXXIV

CONCLUSION

"WHERE are you boarding, Herbert?" asked Ralph.

"In Stanton street."

"I shall wish you to remove to the Astor House in order that we may be together until we sail for Europe."

To this pleasant arrangement Herbert made no opposition. He found it a great change from the dirty and slipshod boarding house to the elegant arrangements of a first-class hotel.

Within a week, much against his will, Mr. Stanton paid over to Ralph Pendleton the fifty thousand dollars of which he had years ago defrauded him and thus the Ranger found himself master of a fortune of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He settled a comfortable annuity on David Marston, the old clerk, through whose evidence he had been able to ferret out the treachery of Mr. Stanton. He is now settled in a comfortable boarding house in Clinton street and usually spends his mornings at the Mercantile Library Reading-Room, in Astor Place. Sometimes he ventures downtown and recalls the years when he, too, was one of them.

Before sailing for Europe, Herbert expressed a desire to repay his uncle the sum of ten dollars which the latter had sent to him. Ralph was surprised when he learned that this uncle had been his guardian. He approved our hero's determination and one morning Herbert entered for the first time his uncle's place of business.

"Is Mr. Stanton in?" he asked of a clerk.

The clerk pointed to the office. Herbert entered.

His uncle looked up, but although he had seen our hero at the Academy of Music, he did not recognize him in the new suit which Ralph had purchased for him.

"Mr. Stanton, I suppose?" said Herbert, with quiet self-possession.

"Yes. Do you wish to speak with me?"

"I must introduce myself," said Herbert. "I am Herbert Mason, your nephew."

"Indeed," said Mr. Stanton, surprised. "When did you come to the city?"

"Some weeks since."

"What brought you here?"

"I had my living to make."

"You had better have remained in the country."

"I do not think so," said Herbert.

"You could have got a place on a farm and in time perhaps might have bought a little land for yourself."

Herbert smiled.

"I did get a place on a farm but I did not like it."

"What are you doing? Have you got a place?"

"Not at present."

"So I supposed," said his uncle, frowning. "You should not have come here. I suppose you relied on me to help you to something. But I have my own family to take care of and my first duty is to them."

"I don't think you quite understand my object in calling," said Herbert, quietly. "I have not come for assistance of any kind."

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Stanton.

"You sent me ten dollars some months since?"

"Yes. I felt that it was best for you to depend on yourself and that more would only encourage you to idleness."

"I have come to thank you for the *loan*," said Herbert, emphasizing the last word, "and to return the money."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Stanton, now thoroughly amazed.

Herbert repeated his former words.

"But I don't understand this. You are out of a place; yet you do not need this money."

"No, I do not need it."

"What are your plans?" he asked. "What are you going to do?"

"I sail for Europe next week," said Herbert, enjoying his uncle's surprise.

"Sail—for—Europe!" ejaculated Mr. Stanton, scarcely believing his ears.

"Yes, I am to go to school there, and shall probably remain three or four years."

"You are trifling with me," said his uncle, irritably. "How can you go to Europe without money?"

"A friend kindly undertakes to pay all my expenses. I go with him."

"Who is your friend?"

"Mr. Ralph Pendleton. I believe you know him."

"Ralph Pendleton!" repeated Mr. Stanton, in renewed surprise. "How did you become acquainted with him?"

"The farmer with whom I was placed in Ohio ill treated me. Ralph lived near by, and helped me to run away."

Mr. Stanton made no comment. When, that evening, at home, he told his family of Herbert's good fortune, Tom was filled with bitter envy. For "that beggar Herbert" to go to Europe in charge of a man of wealth was very mortifying to his pride.

Mr. Stanton made a faint protest against receiving the ten dollars tendered by his nephew but Herbert was determined to repay it. He placed it on the desk and eventually Mr. Stanton placed it in his pocket-book.

With the concurrence of his wife, whose opinion also had been changed, he sent an invitation to Ralph and Herbert to dine with them previous to their sailing for Europe. Herbert, by his new guardian's direction, returned a polite

reply, to the effect that they were too busy in making preparations for their departure to accept the invitation.

In due time our hero sailed for Europe with Mr. Ralph Pendleton. They divided their time between Paris and Berlin, Herbert studying at both places. With his natural abilities, he made rapid progress, and at the end of four years was an accomplished scholar, able to speak both French and German with facility. In watching his progress, Ralph Pendleton found a new and fresh interest in life. He recovered from his old, morbid feeling and became cheerful and happy. On returning to New York, Herbert entered the counting-room of Mr. Godfrey. At twenty-one, the junior partner retiring, he was received as partner in his place, his guardian, Ralph Pendleton, purchasing an interest for him at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. He developed good business abilities and bids fair to swell this sum to a large fortune. There is a prospect that he will, in time, sustain a still closer relation to his senior partner, as it is rumored that Julia Godfrey, now a brilliant young belle, prefers her father's young partner to any other of the crowd of young men who pay her court.

The other characters in our story demand a few closing words. First, for Mr. Stanton. It might have been the sudden withdrawal of the fifty thousand dollars that embarrassed him. At any rate, from that time, nothing prospered with him. He met with loss after loss, until in a financial panic he failed. He saved but a little from the wreck of his fortune. That little started him in a modest business, yielding him, perhaps, one tenth his former income. The brownstone house was sold. He moved into a shabby house in an obscure street, where Mrs. Stanton spends her time mostly in bewailing the loss of her former splendor.

Tom developed habits of extravagance and seemed indisposed to work steadily. In an inferior clerkship, on a

small salary, he gazes with envy at his once-despised cousin, with whom he has completely changed places.

Abner Holden died suddenly in a fit of *deterium tremens*. His habits of intemperance grew upon him until they led to this sad result. To the housekeeper who had been kind to him, Herbert sent a valuable silk dress, of which Mrs. Bickford is very proud. She only wears it on great occasions and then is particular to mention that it was presented to her by Herbert Mason, of the great New York firm of Godfrey & Mason, who was once Abner Holden's bound boy.

Nor was Herbert forgetful of his good friends, the Kents. He paid off the mortgage on the doctor's place and insisted on putting the house in thorough repair and newly furnishing it, so that now the town of Waverley does not contain a handsomer house, inside and out, than that of Dr. Kent.

So we bid farewell to our young hero, fairly launched on a prosperous career, trusting that his life path may be bright to the end and that he may leave behind him, at the end of his career, the reputation of a noble and honorable merchant and a life filled with good deeds.

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